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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a description of the emerging middle echelon unit of school government--the Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA). The document defines RESA's as those offices of school government sandwiched between State and local school district levels and considers the development of the regional educational service agency concept in 30 States. The description of the emerging RESA focuses on an overview of the existing inadequacies of local school districts and the search for alternatives; the development of the regional educational service agency concept in the several States; dominant organizational and programing patterns in Statewide and partial Statewide systems; recommended criteria for the establishment, governance, organization, and operation of RESA; and an ovenview of the major problems and issues in the establishment and operation of RESA units. (Maps may reproduce poorly.) (Author/DN)

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THE EMERGENCE OF THE REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY CONCEPT IN EDUCATION: DOMINANT ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS AND PROGRAMMING THRUSTS

by

E. Robert Stephens, Ph.D.
Professor and Chairman
Department of Administration, Supervision and Curriculum
College of Education, University of Maryland

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THE EMERGENCE OF THE REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY CONCEPT IN EDUCATION: DOMINANT ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS AND PROGRAMMING THRUSTS

INTRODUCTION

State school systems have historically been organized on three basic structural patterns.[1/] These are: the one-echelon system in which there is a single unit of school government; the two-echelon structure comprised of the state educational agency and a statewide system of local educational administrative units; and, the three-echelon organizational pattern consisting of the state educational agency, a statewide system of local education agencies, and a system of middle, or second echelon, units.

In July, 1972, one state, Hawaii, operated a one-echelon state school system structure. Nineteen states operated what essentially constituted a two-echelon structural system. The majority of states, thirty, or three-fifths of the fifty states, functioned with three legally constituted units of school government--the state education agency, a system of local education agencies, and one or more types of middle echelon units. States comprising each of the three basic organizational patterns are shown in Table 1.

Most of the structural modifications in state school systems in recent years have focused on the second level of school government. Some states, particularly those having a traditional three-echelon system, have substantially altered the structural arrangements and programming missions

TABLE 1

BASIC STRUCTURAL PATTERNS OF STATE SCHOOL SYSTEMS,
July 1972

Basic Structural Pattern	State School Systems Included in Classification	Number of States	Percent of States
One-Echelon Pattern	Hawaii	1	2
Two-Echelon Pattern	Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia	19	38
Three-Echelon Pattern	California, Colorado, Connecticut Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming	30	60

of their middle units. Other states having a three-echelon tradition have chosen to eliminate entirely their middle unit or have begun to give serious attention to the phasing out of such units. And, conversely, some states with a traditional two-echelon structural arrangement have promoted the development of a new type of legally constituted middle echelon unit of school government.

This paper will present a description of the emerging middle echelon unit of school government.[2] These units are known by a variety of titles in the states where they exist. While the most common title is still that of the county office of education or county school system, other titles are being increasingly used, such as: Intermediate Unit (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Michigan, Washington), Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (New York), Education Service Centers (Texas), Joint County School System (Iowa), and Educational Service Units (Nebraska).

However, for purposes of this paper, the term "regional educational service agency" (or RESA) will be employed to describe the emerging middle echelon unit. The rationale for the use of the term RESA is that this title possesses greater conceptual clarity and descriptive validity than do other terms. This is so for two principal reasons: these units, either those that are reconstituted middle echelon agencies or those that are new creatures of school government, are typically regional in geographic area, frequently extending beyond the political boundaries of a single county; and, the units are essentially organizations with a posture of service to constituent local school districts rather than agencies designed primarily to perform administrative and regulatory functions for the state education agency as was true of the dominant historical middle echelon unit, the county school system.

The description of the emerging regional educational service agency will focus on the following:

1. an overview of the existing inadequacies of local school districts, and the search for alternatives;
2. the development of the regional educational service agency concept in the several states;
3. dominant organizational patterns in statewide and partial statewide systems;
4. dominant programming patterns in statewide and partial statewide systems;
5. recommended criteria for the establishment, governance, organization, and operation of regional educational service agencies; and,
6. an overview of the major problems and issues in the establishment and operation of RESA units and effective strategies for overcoming or minimizing them. 3/

EXISTING PROGRAMMING INADEQUACIES OF LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THE SEARCH FOR ALTERNATIVES

Introduction

It is the purpose of this section of the paper to present an overview of the existing programming inadequacies of local school districts. In that the local school district in the several states is generally regarded, both statutorily and traditionally, as the primary governmental instrumentality for the provision of educational and educationally related programs and services for elementary-secondary school age children and youth, it is here that the student of school government must first focus in the search for the precipitating factors accounting for the widespread interest in regionalism in education.

In the development of this topic, the following will be briefly reviewed: (1) the universal and continuing goals of public elementary-secondary education; (2) new late Twentieth Century imperatives in public elementary-secondary education; (3) essential programs and services of local school districts; (4) the question of adequate enrollment size of local school districts; and, (5) an overview of existing programming inadequacies.

The section is concluded with the identification of the principal alternatives explored and implemented by political and educational planners and decision-makers in the several states for the improvement of the local school district educational delivery system.

The Universal and Continuing Goals of Public Elementary-Secondary Education

A large body of literature has developed in the last century concerning the goals of public elementary-secondary education in America. Pronouncements regarding the fundamental missions of the nation's schools have been generated intermittently during this period, particularly during the last fifty years, by professional associations, prestigious commissions chartered by the executive branch of the federal government, and consortia of academic scholars.

In 1968, a major service was provided educational planners and decision-makers by a Governor's Committee on Public School Education for the State of Texas in that one of the major activities of this project was a review of the landmark national and state studies of the goals of public education.[4] In all, thirty studies were subjected to a fairly rigid content analysis. The study concluded that while terminology and mode of expression may vary from one statement of goals to the next, or that classification systems may change and emphasis may shift, the identifiable basic goals of education appear to remain much the same over time.[5] Further, the study concluded that the universal and persistent goals of public education could be grouped into the following six broad headings: (1) intellectual discipline; (2) economic independence and vocational opportunity; (3) citizenship and civic responsibility; (4) social development and human relationships; (5) moral and ethical character; and, (6) self-realization.[6]

New Imperatives in Education

While the goals of education could be generally regarded as universal and have remained relatively constant over time, new imperatives in education for the successful attainment of these goals in the Twentieth Century are being increasingly recognized. A number of the more critical imperatives are included in this overview as background for later discussion. Prior to their identification, it is important to note several of the main sources, or precipitating factors, which account for the new imperatives.

Sources of the New Imperatives. A large number of precipitating factors account for much of the present ferment in education. These factors are highly complex and highly interrelated. For purposes of this discussion, a number of the more critical factors are arbitrarily classified into two broad areas: precipitating factors which have their origin in economic and social developments in society; and, precipitating factors which have their origin in the changing concept of the role and function of education in society.

Chief among the economic and social developments which are of tremendous import for the governance, structure and organization of public education are the following:

1. the changing population patterns in the United States (e.g., the declining birth rate, the increase in population, the concentration of the population in metropolitan centers, the greater mobility of the population);
2. the explosion of knowledge as reflected by the scientific and technological revolution of the post WWII period;

3. the increasing struggle for human equality;
4. the changing economic patterns in the United States (e.g., the increasing gross national product, the changing balance of work and leisure time; the declining number of workers in manual labor classifications versus an increasing number of professional, semi-professional, technical and service classifications, the declining status of land as the single measure of wealth);
5. the growth of sophisticated communicative techniques;
6. the tendency of the federal government and federal-state governments to absorb more public service functions once solely or essentially performed by local government; and,
7. the increasing recognition of the interdependence of urban, suburban and rural America and the emergence of a new concept of community economic and social development.

Another large number of precipitating factors accounting for many of the new late Twentieth Century imperatives in education have their origin in the changing concept of the role and function of education in society. Historically the role of public education in America has been perceived primarily as that of transmitting broadly accepted values to children and youth. Today there is substantial evidence of a much wider range of expectancy about what public education should be and do (although there is an anticipated lessening of agreement on how the schools should achieve the new expectations).

Increasingly schools are being viewed as sources of opportunity for social and economic mobility, instruments of social and economic change,

and devices of power and influence. Thus, schools are becoming less a mirror of society and more a force in shaping society.

Some of the new expectations of the role of the school grow out of the following changes in society's attitudes and beliefs about public education:

1. there is substantial evidence of a much deeper public understanding of the importance of education to society in general and to the individual in particular;
2. closely associated with the increased recognition of the importance of education is a growing insistance by the public that educational programming must be of the highest quality possible;
3. there is an increasing realization that an investment in education remains as one of the soundest economic choices available to society;
4. there is a growing insistence that the instrumentalities of school government truly operationalize the concept of equal educational opportunities for all children and youth; and,
5. there is a growing recognition that education is to be one of the prime instrumentalities for economic and social change in society.

The New Imperatives. The two categories of broadly stated precipitating factors summarized above have generated a large number of new imperatives in education. Chief among these are the following:

1. while there is still general acceptance for liberal fiscal support for education or the holding of fiscal support at present levels, there is a concomitant insistence by the public that education be administered in the most efficient and effective manner possible and that educational programming reflect sound cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness principles;
2. there appears to be a growing recognition that a viable structure of education is a critical requisite for the promotion of optimal educational programming and that the present structure of education in many states is an important constraint on the attainment of this goal;
3. there appears to be a growing insistence that the instrumentalities of school government truly operationalize the concept of equal educational opportunity and that much of the present manner of doing business in education is in direct confrontation with this concept;
4. there is a growing need for the nation's schools to successfully implement the "new technology" in the educational process;
5. there is a pressing need for the development of sophisticated planning and evaluation expertise in education and a parallel need for an increased allocation of human and financial resources for research and development activities; and,

6. there is a pressing need for the development and testing of a more relevant curricula in the nation's schools in order that the many and diverse needs of society can be successfully met.

The Adequate Enrollment Size of a Local School District

The complex and difficult question of the adequate enrollment size of a local school district has historically generated considerable interest. A brief overview of this issue follows. This will be done by first reviewing the consensus view found in the literature regarding general criteria for the determination of the adequate size of a local administrative unit. Additional insight into the question of optimal enrollment size can also be secured by an examination of the principal recommendations advanced in the literature regarding the size of enrollment and the provision of selected specialized programs and services deemed essential for the establishment of an adequate educational program.

Prior to proceeding to these topics, however, it is important to establish minimal base line data concerning the present structure of local school districts in the nation. As shown in Table 2, there were 17,237 public school systems in the United States in 1971-72, 16,859 of these operating units. This represents a reduction of 26.3 percent from the 23,390 systems, both operating and non-operating, five years previously. Most of the reduction occurred through the elimination of smaller-sized districts, particularly those previously enrolling less than 1200 students in grades K-12 inclusive, and in non-operating districts. However, even

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS,
BY ENROLLMENT SIZE, 1966-67 and 1971-72*

Size of Enrollment	Number of Public School Systems		Percent Change 1966-67 to 1971-72
	1971-72	1966-67	
25,000 or more	194	170	14.1
12,000 to 24,999	423	350	20.9
6,000 to 11,999	990	879	12.6
3,000 to 5,999	1,913	1,726	10.8
1,800 to 2,999	1,952	1,819	7.3
1,200 to 1,799	1,650	1,636	0.9
600 to 1,199	2,635	2,839	- 7.2
300 to 599	2,366	2,723	-13.1
150 to 299	1,645	2,091	-21.3
50 to 149	1,416	2,230	-36.5
15 to 49	905	2,673	-66.1
1 to 14	770	2,386	-67.7
0 (non-operating)	378	1,868	-79.8
Total	17,237	23,390	-26.3

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1972 Census of Governments, Public School Systems in 1971-72, Preliminary Report No. 2, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, December 1972, p. 3.

with this significant activity in the nation's smaller districts in the five-year period, only slightly more than two-fifths, or 41.3 percent, of the nation's operating districts in 1971-72 had enrollments in excess of 1200 students, as shown in Table 3. Furthermore, as also shown in Table 3, only 3.6 percent of the nation's 16,859 operating districts in 1971-72 enrolled 12,000 or more students. However, these districts enrolled a strong two-thirds (43.8 percent) of the nation's approximately 48 million elementary-secondary school age children and youth.

General Criteria for the Determination of Adequate Size of a Local School District. Two excellent statements of general criteria have been offered by Faber and the National Committee for Support of the Public Schools.

Faber reviewed a large number of studies concerning the enrollment size requirements of a satisfactory school district.[7] He determined that the most frequently cited criteria could be classified into five categories:

1. Scope of Program: The district should offer a comprehensive program of elementary and secondary education. Some authorities include nursery schools, kindergarten, junior college, and adult education as well.

2. Range of Educational Services: The district should provide a complete range of educational services, including: special classes for physically and mentally handicapped; remedial programs for underachievers; special programs for academically gifted pupils; and health, guidance, and counseling services for all pupils.

3. The Community: The district should include one well-defined community or a group of interrelated communities which form a natural sociological area.

4. Administrative and Instructional Staff: The district should be large enough to employ specialized administrative and supervisory personnel and teachers with preparation in all areas taught.

TABLE 3

DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATING PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS, BY SIZE OF ENROLLMENT, 1971-72*

Size of Enrollment	Operating Public School Systems			Pupils Enrolled		
	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Number	Percent	Cumulative Percent
25,000 or more	194	1.1	--	14,083,648	29.3	--
12,000 to 24,999	423	2.5	3.6	6,938,061	14.5	43.8
6,000 to 11,999	990	5.7	9.3	8,194,033	17.0	60.8
3,000 to 5,999	1,913	11.1	20.4	7,966,400	16.6	77.4
1,800 to 2,999	1,952	11.3	31.7	4,541,192	9.5	86.9
1,200 to 1,799	1,650	9.6	41.3	2,446,499	5.1	92.0
600 to 1,199	2,635	15.3	56.6	2,267,875	4.7	96.7
300 to 599	2,366	13.7	70.3	1,036,880	2.2	98.9
150 to 299	1,645	9.5	79.8	365,819	0.8	99.7
50 to 149	1,416	8.2	88.0	136,127	0.3	100.0
15 to 49	905	5.3	93.3	25,903	0.1	100.1
1 to 14	770	4.5	97.8	6,637	>.05	100.1
Total Operating	16,859	97.8	97.8	48,009,074	100.1	100.1
Total Non-operating	378	2.2	100.0			

*Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1972 Census of Governments, Public School Systems in 1972-73, Preliminary Report No. 2, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, December 1972, p. 9.

5. Economic Base: The district must be able to support financially the programs and services implied by the above criteria. Statements of economic criteria may refer to the total income available to the district or to its financial efficiency as measured by cost per pupil.

The Faber study concluded that the ideal size of an administrative unit appears to be between 10,000 and 20,000 students.[8] He took an even stronger position concerning the minimal size of an administrative unit when he stated that, based on an examination of the literature, no district could offer a full range of educational programs and services efficiently if it had an enrollment of fewer than 10,000 students.

The report of the National Committee for Support of the Public Schools tended to give prominence to the same general criteria examined in the Faber study.[9] As might be expected, however, the NCSPS report highlighted the financial inefficiency of small scale educational programs and concluded that efficiency in operations increases with size untill enrollments reach approximately 3,000 students.[10]

Stephens and Spiess reviewed 125 research studies dealing with the size of enrollment criterion, as measured by the number of pupils enrolled, and its relationship between the following seven variables: (1) size of enrollment and pupil achievement; (2) size of enrollment and educational costs; (3) size of enrollment and the educational program; (4) size of enrollment and extracurricular activities; (5) size of enrollment and professional staff qualifications; (6) size of enrollment and special services; and, (7) size of enrollment and school plant.[11]

Because of a multitude of criteria variables uncovered in this review, the authors concluded that it is not possible to provide the magic number for the determination of an adequate size local school district

administrative unit. However, they observed that a student population base of 10,000 was most frequently supported in the research literature as the minimum number in terms of a majority of the seven key variables examined.[12/]

Enrollment Size and the Provision of Specialized Programs and Services. As a further aid in the examination of the complex question of the adequate size of an administrative unit and the component elements thereof, recommendations concerning the enrollment requirements of twenty-five selected specialized programs and services are shown in Table 4. The listing is not intended to be complete; rather, it is representative of the diverse elements of an optimal educational program advanced in the literature and in legislative provisions for elementary-secondary education.

As shown in Table 4, many of the recommended necessary and essential programs and services require large enrollment bases. This is due primarily to one or more of the following factors: the accepted low prevalence ratios associated with many of the programs and services for children and youth having exceptionalities; commonly accepted staffing standards generally associated with case-load guidelines (either staff or students); and, high cost factors due to the required specialization of staff, facilities and equipment, and/or the application of accepted economies of scale in the organization and operation of the program or service.

Existing Programming Inadequacies

A great body of literature presently exists which identifies the prevaling programming inadequacies of local school districts.

TABLE 4

ENROLLMENT SIZE AND THE PROVISION OF SELECTED SPECIALIZED PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AND/OR RECOMMENDED STAFFING RATIOS

Program Area	Recommended Enrollment Size and/or Staffing Ratio*
Special Education/General	20,000 student enrollment
specialist, educable mentally retarded	1 per 600 student enrollment
specialist, trainable mentally retarded	1 per 2,500 student enrollment
specialist, visually handicapped (blind)	1 per 15,000 student enrollment
specialist, visually handicapped (partially sighted)	1 per 15,000 student enrollment
psychologist	1 per 2,500 student enrollment
psychometrist	1 per 10-12,000 student enrollment
hearing clinician	1 per 7,000 student enrollment
specialist, physically handicapped	1 per 12,000 student enrollment
physical therapist	1 per 30,000 student enrollment
speech clinician	1 per 3,000 student enrollment
specialist, gifted	1 per 1,000 student enrollment
Health Education and Related	
school nurse	1 per 2,000 student enrollment
specialist, homebound	1 per 20,000 student enrollment
dental hygienist	1 per 2,000 student enrollment
School Social Worker	1 per 3,000 student enrollment
Attendance Officer	1 per 6,000 student enrollment
Educational Media Consultant	1 per 10,000 student enrollment
Curricular Subject Matter Consultant	1 per 200 teachers
Guidance Counselor	1 per 300 students (secondary)/ 1 per 600 students (elementary)
Librarian	1 each attendance center
Specialized Programs	
vocational-technical center	15,000 minimum student enrollment
data processing center	100,000 minimum student enrollment
educational media center	45,000 minimum student enrollment

*Source: A large number of statements in the literature were reviewed in the compilation of this table. No attempt is made here to document these sources.

Most observers of education in rural settings cite the following themes in describing the limitations of small schools:

1. high per pupil costs;
2. lack of comprehensive curricula and inadequate instructional resources;
3. inability to attract and retain qualified staff;
4. multiple assignments for teachers; and,
5. lack of essential support services.[13]

As was true of rural education, a great body of literature has also emerged in recent years concerning the problems of providing educational opportunities of high quality in an urban setting. The following themes are typically cited in these analyses:

1. the deterioration of the financial base for the support of education;
2. the inability to provide equal educational opportunities for the culturally and educationally disadvantaged;
3. the rigidity of educational planning and programming.[14]

The Search for Alternatives

Given the essential and necessary educational programs and services and the new imperatives in education, and given the standards for the determination of an adequate enrollment size of a local administrative unit previously reviewed, the question of alternative approaches available to educational and political planners and decision-makers for the improvement

of education as it has historically and is presently structured in the several states is an important issue.

To date, four basic alternatives have been utilized in the several states. These are: the formation of larger administrative units; the provision of services to local school districts by some form of regional educational service agency; the provision of cooperative programs between two or more local school districts; and, the provision of services to local school districts by the state education agency.

Each of the four basic alternatives have been in use in varying degrees in the several states. Historically, the first alternative, the movement for the formation of larger administrative units, has been the most popular. As shown in Table 5, the number of public local school districts in the United States has been reduced from 127,649 in 1932 to 17,237 in 1971. The most common approaches to school district reorganization employed in the several states have been the following: reorganization through legislative mandate (particularly with regard to the elimination of non-operating and non-unified districts); reorganization through the passage of permissive legislation allowing, through local initiative, the merger of two or more districts; and, reorganization through a combination of legislative and regulatory incentives and/or legislative and regulatory penalties (particularly with regard to the establishment of formulae for the distribution of state aid and/or the establishment of minimal approval standards for local school district operation).

The widespread use of these three approaches to local school district reorganization, either singularly or in combination, has greatly reduced

TABLE 5

TREND IN THE NUMBER OF PUBLIC LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS
IN THE UNITED STATES FOR SELECTED YEARS, 1932 to 1971

Year	Number of Public Local School Districts	Change from Previous Reporting Period
1932	127,649*	0
1948	105,971*	-27,649
1953	67,075*	-38,896
1961	36,402*	-30,673
1969	23,390*	-13,402
1971	17,237**	- 6,153

*Source: School District Reorganization: A Journey That Must Not End, American Association of School Administrators, Washington, 1962.

**Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1972 Census of Governments, Public School Systems in 1971-72, Preliminary Report No. 2, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, December 1972, p. 9.

the number of local school districts in the United States, particularly in the period prior to 1960. However, beginning in the mid 1960's, certain constraints on the formation of districts, particularly in non-metropolitan regions which more nearly approach the 10,000 student base standard, began to be increasingly recognized. Central to a majority of these concerns was a recognition that the demographic and geographic characteristics of many regions of the nation precluded the formation of more optimal units and a parallel realization that certain philosophical bases of American public education would be undermined if these demographic and geographic constraints were not fully recognized.

The second most frequently used alternative for the improvement of local school district educational capabilities was the formation of some type of regional educational service agency for the purpose of providing programs and services to local districts. The use of this alternative gained its greatest momentum in the mid 1960's and remains today as one of the biggest movements in school government in this nation. The widespread use of this alternative is evidenced by the fact that fifteen states in the past approximately ten years have developed either statewide or partial statewide systems of regional educational service agencies. Another nine states have taken significant action, and the concept has been given serious study by the legislative and/or executive branches of state government in still another large number of states.[15/]

The balance of this paper will deal with the dominant form of regional educational service agencies emerging in the several states which have opted for this alternative. To be highlighted are the following: (1) a profile of state action to date; (2) a profile of the major organizational and programming characteristics of regional educational service

agencies; (3) recommended criteria for the establishment, governance, organization and operation of regional units; and, (4) an overview of the principal political and administrative issues surrounding the concept and effective strategies for overcoming or minimizing them.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY CONCEPT IN THE SEVERAL STATES

Introduction

It is the purpose of this section to briefly describe the state-by-state development of the concept in the twenty-four states that have established a form of regional educational service agency since approximately 1960. For purposes of this paper, the state activity has been clustered into four major categories. These are:

Group One: the development of regional educational service agencies in states which have legislatively mandated a statewide network

Group Two: the development of regional educational service agencies in states which have enacted permissive legislation allowing the formation of such units

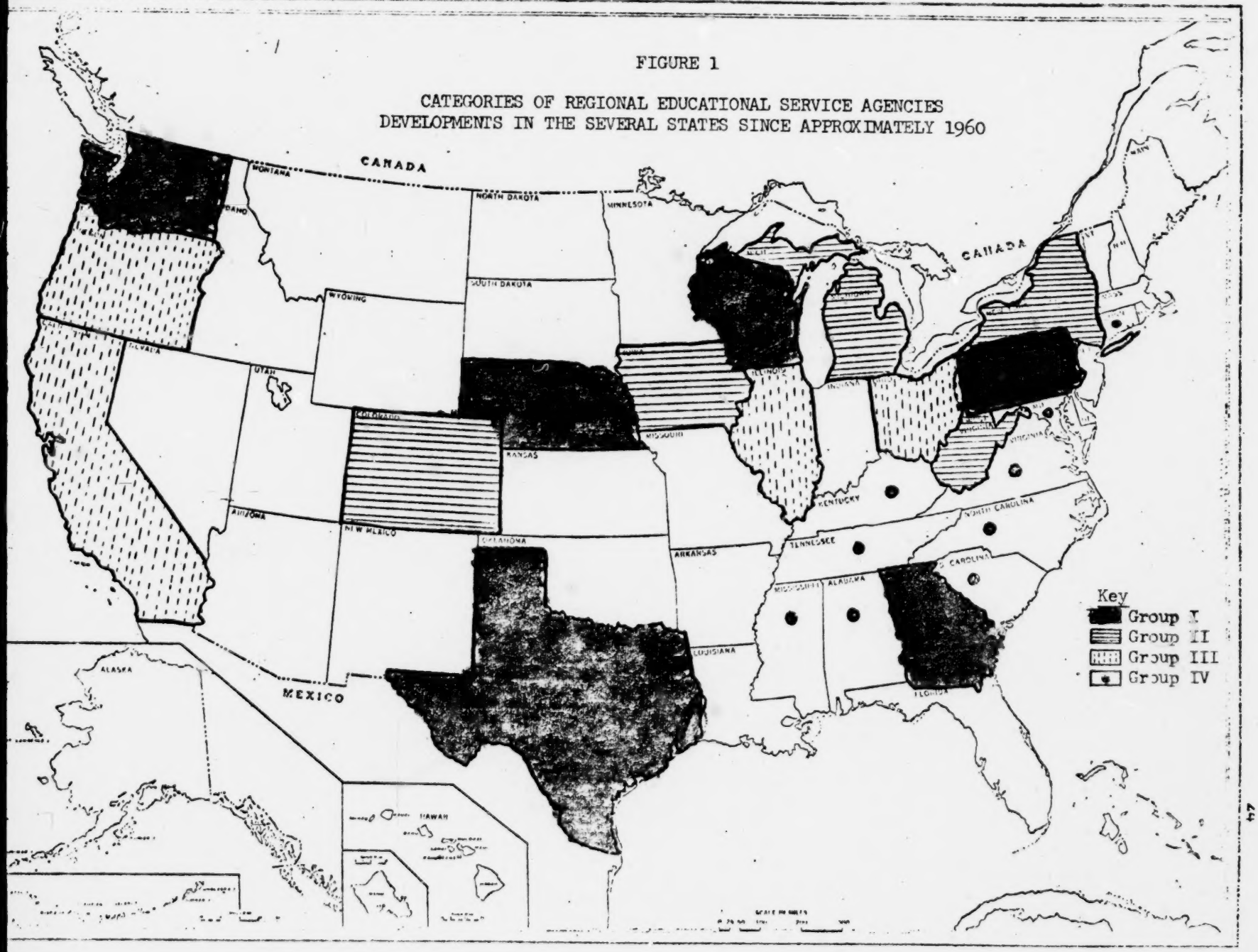
Group Three: the development of regional educational service agencies in states which have substantially strengthened the service role of an existing middle echelon unit of school government

Group Four: the development of multi-purpose educational cooperatives

The extent of implementation of each of the four major categories of regional educational service agency development and the individual states included in each is shown in Figure 1. As shown, six states presently function under a legislative mandate to create a statewide network of RESA's. These are: Georgia, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin.

FIGURE 1

CATEGORIES OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SEVERAL STATES SINCE APPROXIMATELY 1960



Five additional states, those of Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, New York and West Virginia, have enacted enabling legislation permitting the formation of regional educational service agencies. While New York State's legislative framework was first established over twenty years ago, the remaining four states have taken action within the time frame focused upon in this paper.

Group Three is made up of four additional states, those of California, Illinois, Ohio and Oregon. In these states meaningful action has occurred in recent years to improve the service role of their existing statewide network of RESA units, the single county school systems.

The final category, Group Four, includes developments in nine additional states which have recently enacted enabling legislation or formulated policy action at the state education agency level permitting the establishment of still another form of RESA, the multi-purpose educational cooperative. Eight of the nine states are members of the Appalachian Regional Commission. These are: Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina. The ninth state is Connecticut.

Excluded from the description of the development of educational cooperatives are other, frequently single-purpose and typically sporadic, multi-jurisdictional programs such as: regional vocational-technical programs in many states (e.g. Delaware, New Jersey), special education and educational media programs (Missouri, and educational data processing in Minnesota. Also excluded from consideration in the paper are descriptions of developments in still other states where the concept of a statewide network of regional educational service agencies has been seriously studied

in recent years or is presently under study by the executive and/or legislative branch of state government.

Group One: Statewide Legislatively Mandated Statewide Systems of Regional Educational Service Agencies

In July, 1973, statewide systems of regional educational service agencies were in operation in the six states of Georgia, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin. A brief profile of each of the state networks follows. Focus is given in the profile to the following principal characteristics: legislative framework, governance and administration, financial support base, and major programming features.

Georgia.[16] Georgia established a statewide network of Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESA's) by statutory enactment in 1972. The State Board of Education, which was given relatively broad authority over the units, approved eighteen CESA's in January of the same year. The historical precedent for the new units was a system of "shared services programs" generally developed sporadically by local school districts in the state in the immediate years prior to enactment of the new legislation.

In the 1972-73 school year, thirteen CESA's were in operation. This number increased to sixteen for the present year. The geographic location of the units is shown in Figure 2. At least four local school districts in each of the CESA's requested state approval to form the unit, as required by statute. Once established, all local school districts in a CESA are eligible for membership. However, participation is voluntary. As established in the legislation, the geographic boundaries of the CESA's must conform to the districts established by the State Planning and Community

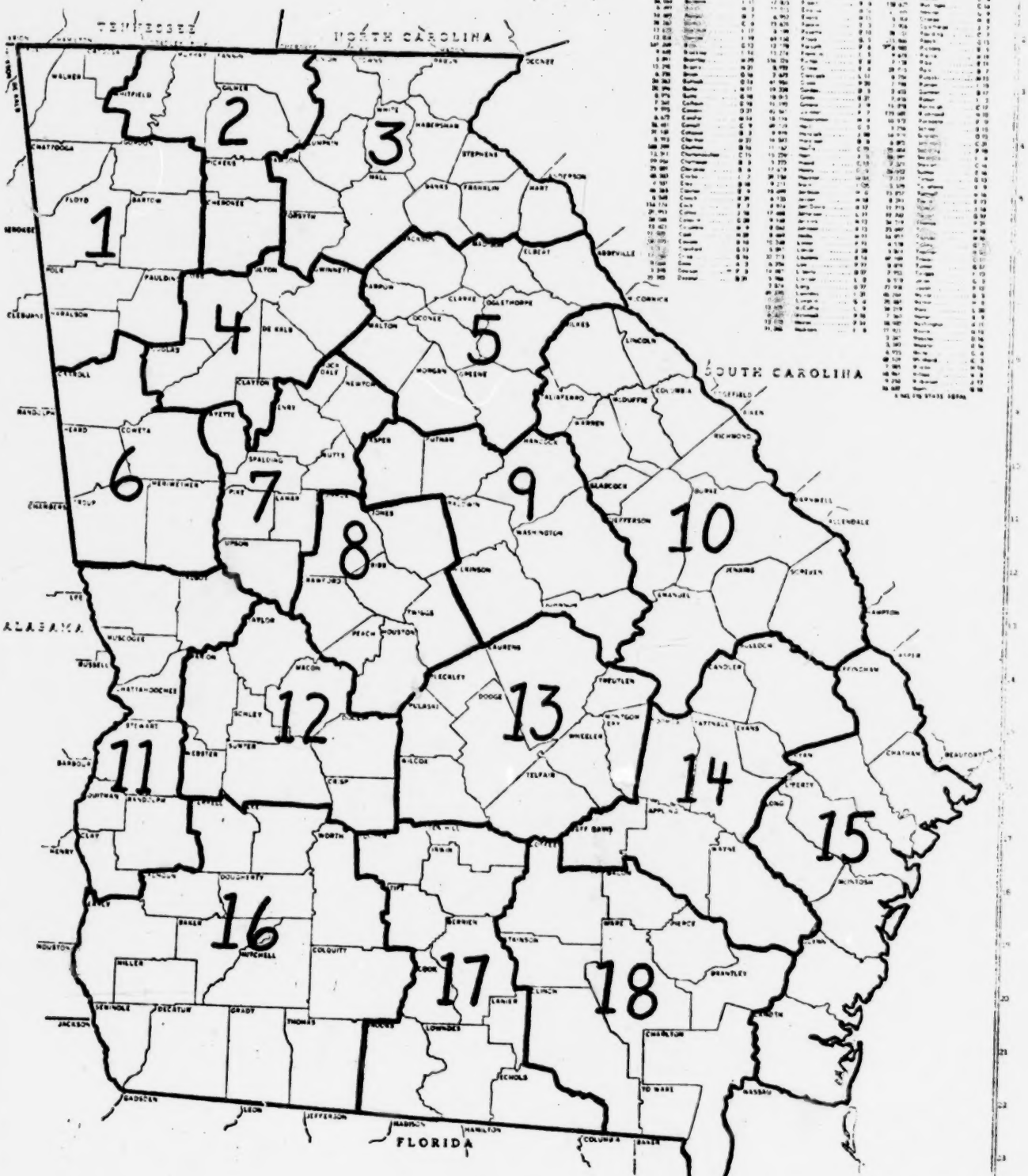


FIGURE 2

BOUNDARIES OF GEORGIA'S COOPERATIVE
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES, July 1973

Affairs Policy Board in 1971 for the administration and planning of state and federal programs.

The units are governed by the Board of Control, composed of one representative from each participating member local school district. The local school district governing board may designate a board member or its chief administrative officer to represent the district on the Board of Control. The chief administrative officer of each CESA, the Director, is approved by the Board of Control and serves as its secretary.

CESA's are provided earmarked appropriations from the state. Their principal source of financial support is derived, however, from service contracts with participating local school districts. The units are also eligible toreceive federal and private monies. They do not have fiscal taxing authority nor are they permitted to hold title to real property.

The principal programming features of the thirteen units in operation in 1972-73 were the following:

1. programs and services for exceptional children (e.g., psychological services, classes for the educable mentally retarded, and trainable mentally retarded, deaf and hard-of-hearing);
2. subject matter consultant services; and,
3. vocational-technical education.

Essential statewide planning and monitoring of CESA operations is promoted by thc designation of one of the components of the state education agency, the Office of School Administrative Services, as the principal administrative unit responsible for the new regional educational service agencies.

Nebraska.[17] The Nebraska legislature mandated a statewide system of nineteen Educational Service Units (ESU's) in 1965. The units were designed primarily to provide supplemental educational services to local school districts. All school districts were placed in an ESU in the initial legislation. However, a provision of the 1965 legislation permits any county to withdraw from the ESU if at least 5 percent of the legal voters in three-fifths of the local school districts in the county so petition and the issue receives a majority vote in the next general election.

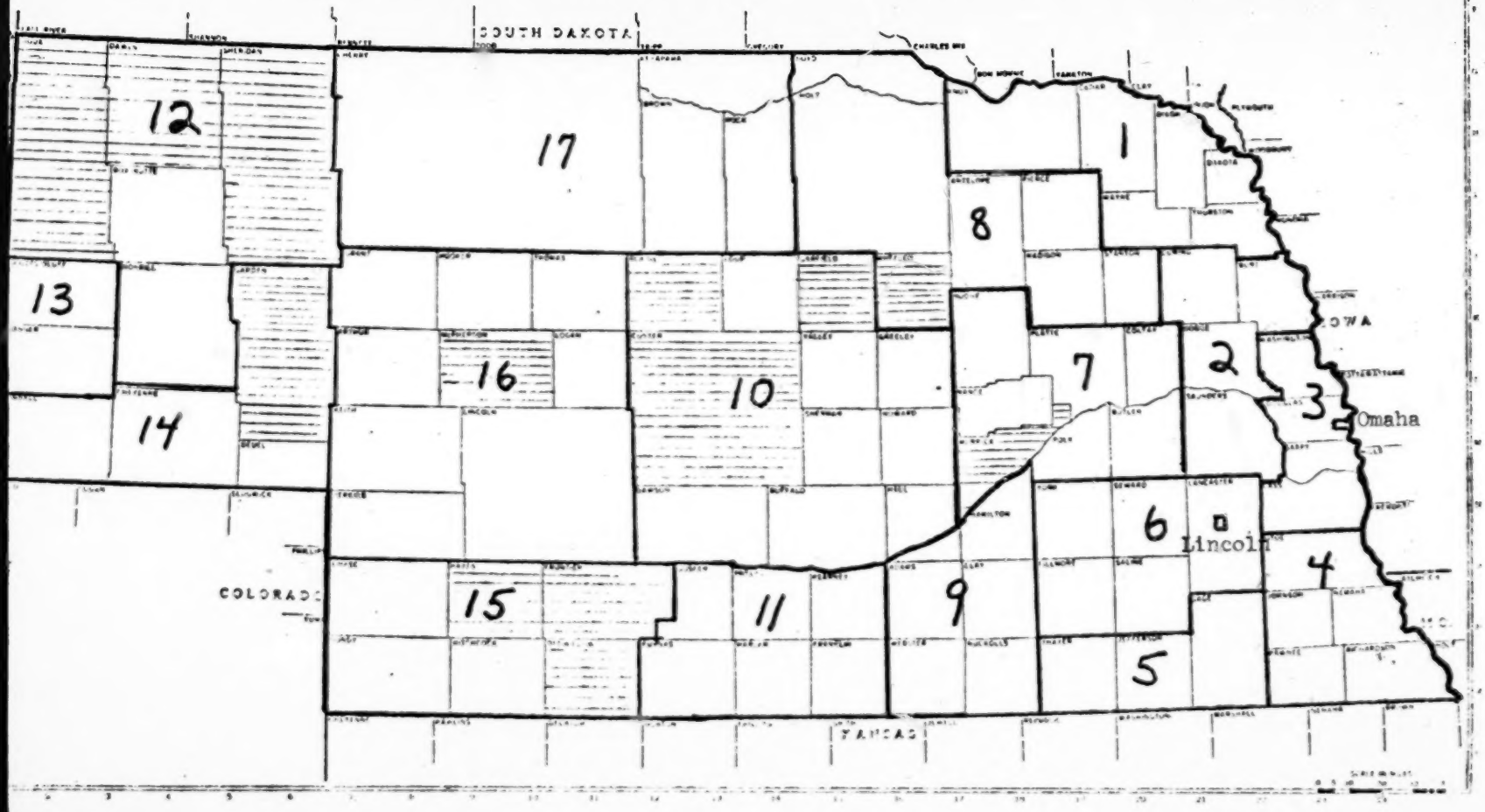
Between 1965 and 1972, nineteen counties, a majority of them in the less sparsely populated central and western regions of the state, were subsequently removed from an ESU. As a result, in 1972 the state, while still technically having a statewide network of ESU's, had only seventeen operating units. In 1973, the Nebraska legislature required that the Omaha and Lincoln school systems either join their respective ESU's or form separate ESU's. Both chose the latter source. Thus in July, 1973, the state again had nineteen regional educational service units embracing all but thirteen of the state's 93 counties. The geographic boundaries of the units are shown in Figure 3.

The ESU's are governed by a popularly elected board. Each member county is allowed one representative and four members are elected at-large. The governing board appoints its chief administrative officer.

ESU's are authorized to levy a property tax not to exceed one mill. However, the majority of financial support base is provided by contractual service agreements with constituent local school districts, and from

FIGURE 3

BOUNDARIES OF NEBRASKA'S EDUCATIONAL SERVICE UNITS, July 1973



federal monies. The ESU's may acquire and hold title to real property.

The dominant programming thrusts of Nebraska's regional educational service agencies are:

1. programs and services for exceptional children;
2. subject matter consultant services; and,
3. administrative programs and services.

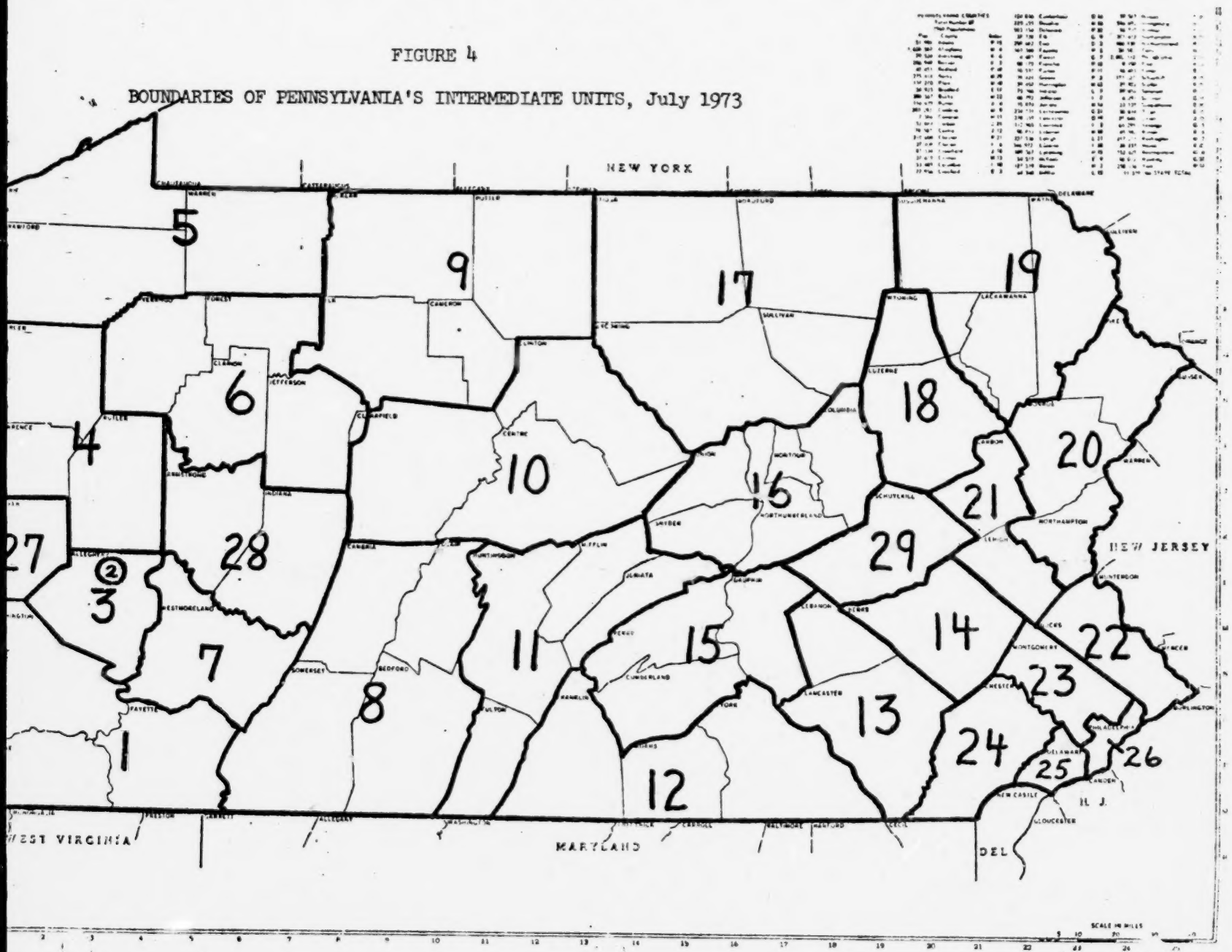
Pennsylvania.[18] In 1970 the state legislature simultaneously dissolved the offices of the county superintendent of schools and county board of directors and enacted legislation creating a statewide network of twenty-nine Intermediate Units (IU's). The geographic boundaries of the IU's are shown in Figure 4. All local school districts in the state are included in an IU, although participation in IU programming is voluntary.

The Board of Directors of the IU's consists of thirteen members elected from among the directors of the constituent local school districts. The Board of Directors appoints the chief administrative officer of the unit, the Executive Director. Each IU has a mandatorially required Intermediate Unit Council composed of all chief administrative officers of constituent local districts. The Intermediate Unit Council serves in an advisory capacity to the IU.

IU's receive state appropriations computed on the basis of a weighted formula which includes an enrollment factor and a real value factor. Local school districts also can be assessed a general fee for the IU's operation budget. IU's also make extensive use of service contracts and are the recipients of substantial federal monies. The units have no taxing authority nor may they hold title to real property.

FIGURE 4

BOUNDARIES OF PENNSYLVANIA'S INTERMEDIATE UNITS, July 1973



Virtually every conceivable program offered by a regional educational service agency anywhere in the nation is offered by one or more of the Commonwealth's Intermediate Units, particularly by the comprehensive units serving the metropolitan Philadelphia and Pittsburg regions. Statewide, however, the following represent the dominant programming features of the IU's:

1. vocational-technical education;
2. comprehensive data processing services;
3. comprehensive educational media programs and services;
4. comprehensive programs and services for exceptional children;
5. subject matter consultant services; and,
6. research and evaluation services.

Texas.[19] In 1965 the Texas Legislature authorized the State Board of Education to establish a comprehensive statewide system of instructional media centers by September, 1967. This action occurred almost simultaneously with passage by the Congress of the United States of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. One of the principal features of the latter legislation was the promotion of exemplary education programs in each of the states through the earmarking of funds, through Title III of the Act, for the establishment of supplementary education centers in the states.

In 1967 the Texas Legislature expanded the potential scope of programs and services that might be offered by the instructional media centers authorized two years previously. Subsequently, the State Board of Education established a statewide network of twenty Education Service Centers (ESC's).

The geographic boundaries of the ESC's are shown in Figure 5. All local school districts are members of an ESC. Participation in programs offered by an ESC, however, is voluntary.

The units are governed by a five or seven member Board of Directors elected by a Joint Committee selected by each local district and four-year institution of higher education located within the ESC. The Board of Control appoints its chief administrative officer, the Executive Director.

ESC's are financed by both public and private sources. Funds for instructional media services, which are common in all of the units, are provided for on a matching basis through local school district service contracts and state appropriations. State appropriations are also available for data processing services which are offered throughout the network. The remaining principal sources of monies are derived from service contracts and federal monies. The units do not have taxing authority. They may hold title to real property.

The principal programming thrusts of the Education Service Centers are:

1. comprehensive instructional media services (e.g., film library, duplication services, tape library, consultant services, in-service programs);
2. comprehensive computer services (e.g., scheduling, test scoring, grade reporting, payroll and records);
3. subject matter consultant services;
4. comprehensive programs and services for exceptional children;
5. migrant education;

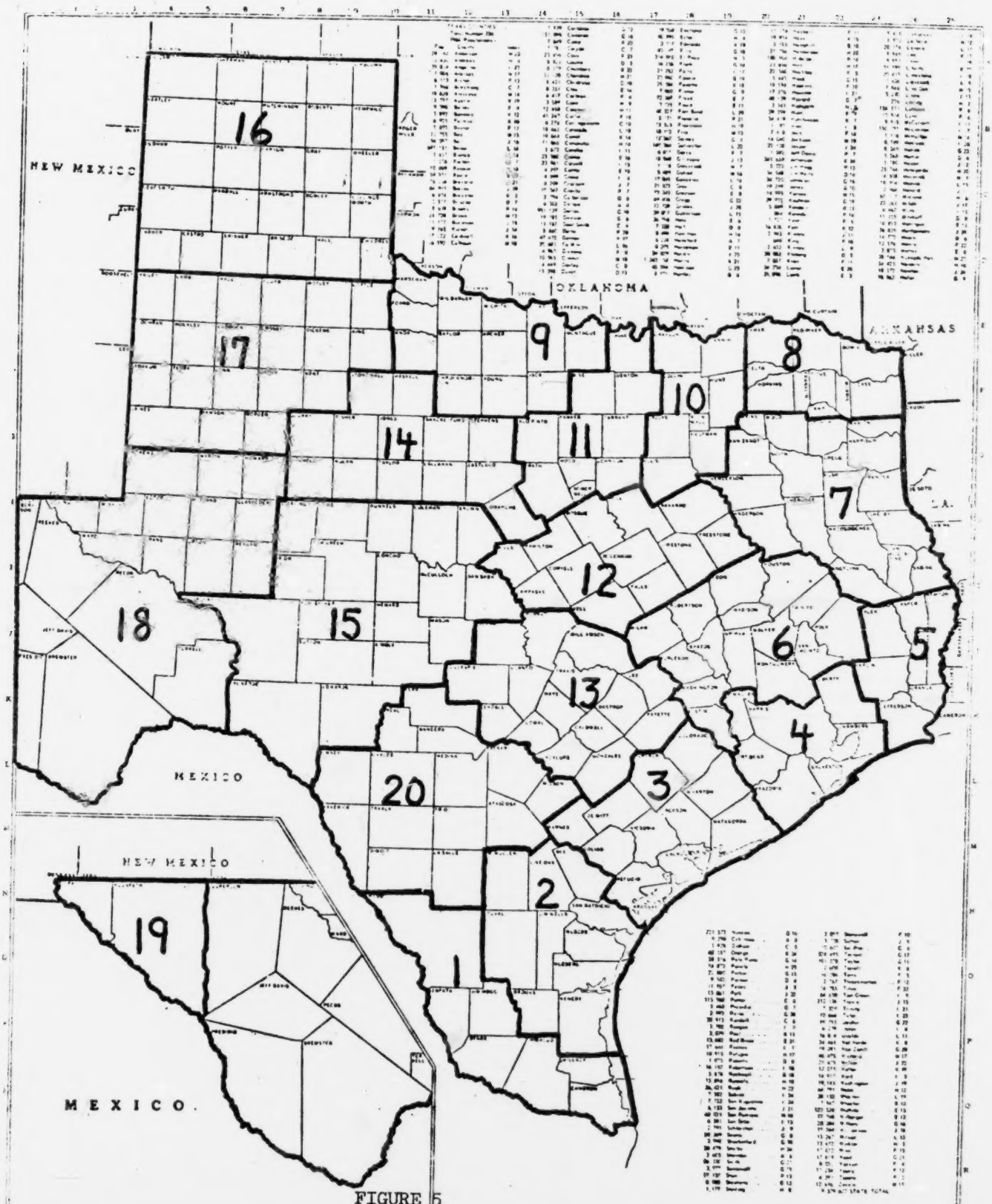


FIGURE 5

BOUNDARIES OF TEXAS' EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTERS, July 1973

6. driver education;
7. drug abuse and crime prevention programs; and,
8. comprehensive regional planning and evaluation services.

One feature of the Texas regional educational service agency arrangement is the elaborate system for the promotion of state education agency planning and communication with the twenty ESC units, and vertically and horizontally with other educational delivery systems in the state. Exemplary among the many features of this scheme are the following:

1. the designation of a major component of the state education agency as the principal unit for the planning and operation of ESC's which not only promotes internal coordination within the agency but, of most importance, contributes to horizontal coordination with other units of state government;
2. the use of a Joint Committee in each ESC composed of representatives of local school districts and four-year institutions which promotes direct two-way communication between the major elements of the educational delivery systems in the region;
3. the use by the state education agency of a Statewide Advisory Commission on Education Service Centers composed of the chairman of each Board of Directors which also contributes significantly to the establishment of a platform for joint planning and communication; and,
4. the use by the state education agency of a statewide

Planning Council composed of the Executive Directors of each of the ESC's.

Washington.[20] Permissive legislation was enacted in 1965 allowing for the formulation of multi-county regional educational service agencies to replace the state's thirty-nine county offices. By 1969, six such units had been formed. In 1969, the state legislature mandated the formation of a statewide network of fourteen Intermediate School Districts (ISD's), and in 1972, all fourteen were operative. Last year two mergers of ISD's were approved by the State Board of Education. Thus the present statewide network consists of twelve ISD's. The geographic boundaries of the units are shown in Figure 6.

A popularly elected seven member board serves as the governing unit of each ISD. By resolution, the board may increase its size to nine members. The board is responsible for the selection of the chief administrative officer. IDS's derive their financial support from four main sources: service contracts with constituent local school districts, county appropriations, state appropriations and federal grants. In 1971-72, the latter constituted approximately two-fifths of the revenue of all of the IDS's combined. The units do not have taxing authority, nor do they enjoy fiscal independence in that their budgets are subject to review by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. ISD's may hold title to real property.

The major programming thrusts of the Intermediate School Districts in Washington are the following:

1. comprehensive administrative services (e.g., data processing, legal consultant services, financial

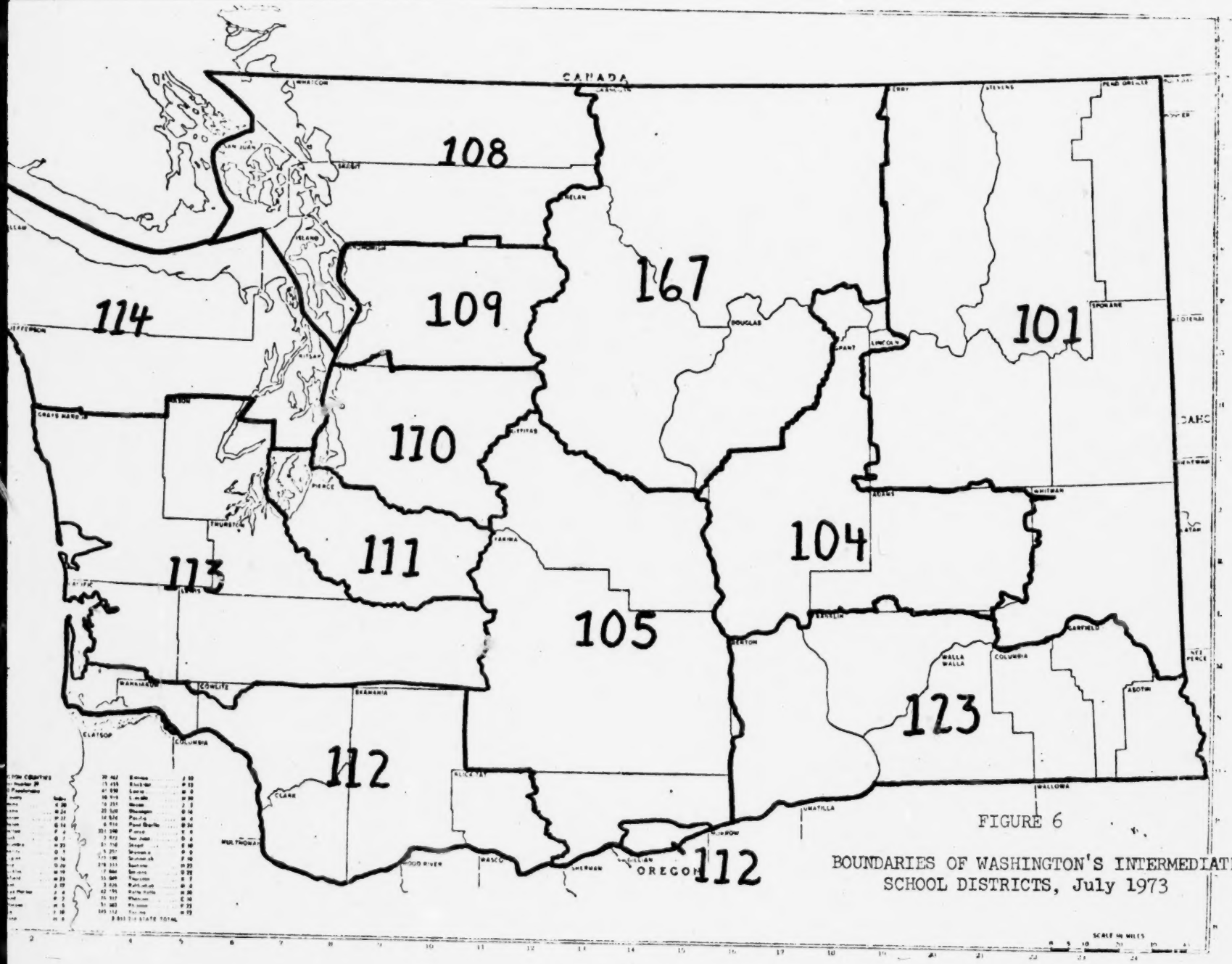


FIGURE 6

BOUNDARIES OF WASHINGTON'S INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS, July 1973

consultant services);

2. staff development services;
3. educational media services; and,
4. comprehensive administrative and regulatory services for the state education agency (e.g., enforcement of compulsory attendance laws, apportionment of state monies to local school districts).

Wisconsin.[21] The county education unit in Wisconsin came under regular and intensive study during the fifteen year period 1950 to 1965. In 1963 the state legislature chartered a commission whose function was to develop a plan to form all areas of the state into cooperative educational service agencies by 1965 and abolish the office of county superintendent of schools. A statewide network of nineteen Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESA's) was subsequently established on July 1, 1965. The geographic boundaries of the units are shown in Figure 7. All school districts in the state are automatically members of a CESA although participation in programs and services is voluntary.

Each agency is governed by a Board of Control composed of representatives of constituent local school district boards of education. The board has authority to appoint its chief administrative officer, the Agency Coordinator.

CESA's have no taxing authority. They receive minimal state support, presently $34,000 annually for administrative costs of the agency. Their primary source of financial support is from service contracts with participating local school districts, and from federal monies. They are excluded from ownership of real property.

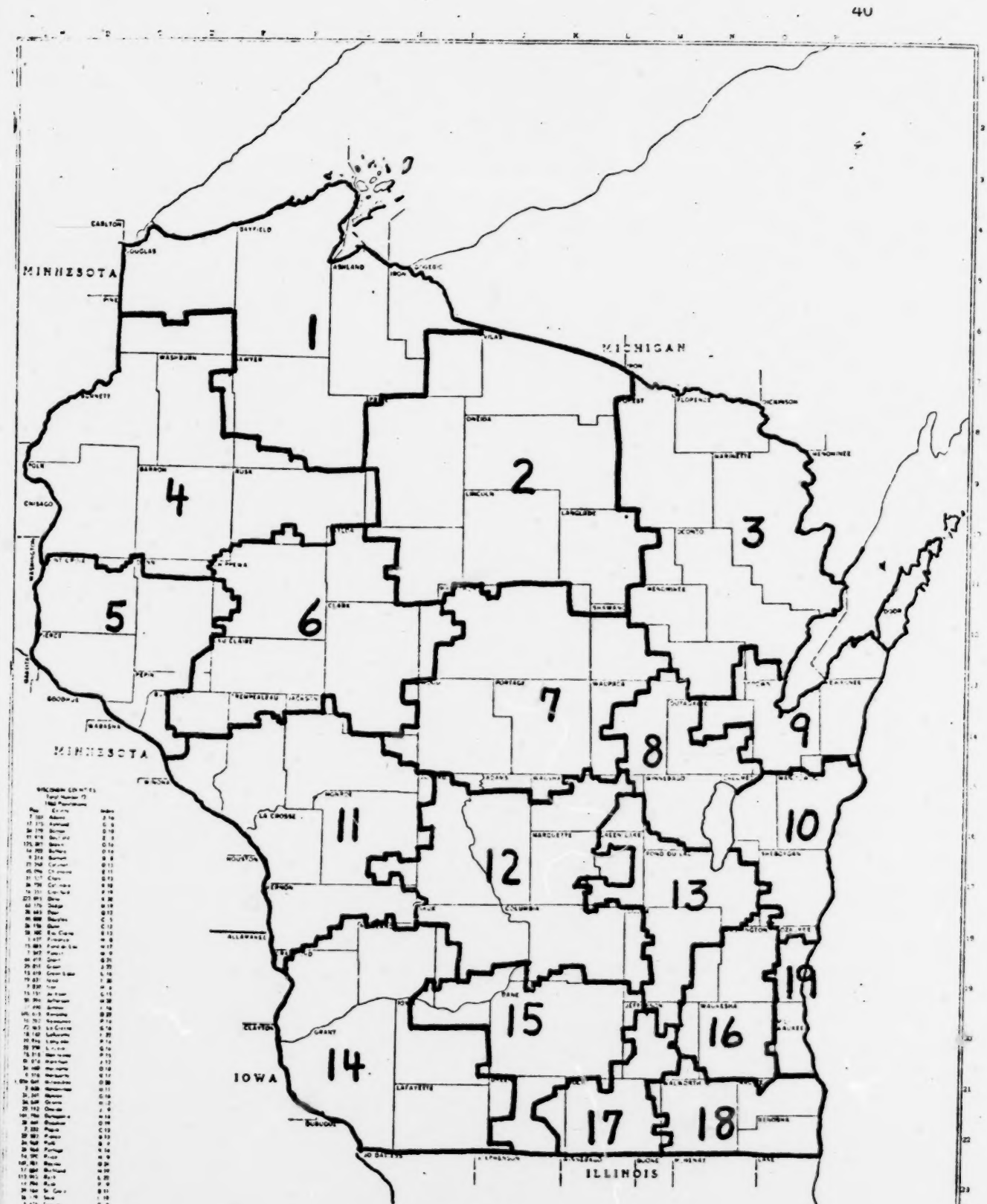


FIGURE 7

BOUNDARIES OF WISCONSIN'S COOPERATIVE
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES, July 1973

The major programming patterns of Wisconsin's regional educational service agencies tend to follow those of regional operations in other statewide systems. There is a heavy commitment for the provision of special education programs and services, curriculum consultant services, educational media services and data processing.

Another, though unusual, function performed by all CESA's is their statutorially mandated charge to appoint an Agency School Committee. The primary responsibility of this unit is the study and evaluation of existing local school district structures. In the event the Agency School Committee finds structural limitations in local school districts, it is responsible for proposing organizational modifications.

Group Two: Regional Educational Service Agency Development in States Having Permissive Legislation

In July, 1973, the regional educational service agency concept was partially implemented on a statewide basis in the five states of Colorado, Iowa, Michigan, New York and West Virginia. The first four states presently have enabling legislation permitting the formulation, on a voluntary basis, of such units. A brief profile of the five partial statewide networks follows. Emphasis in the profile is given to the following principal characteristics: legislative framework, governance and administration, financial support base and major programming features.

Colorado.[22/] In 1965 the state legislature enacted permissive legislation allowing two or more local school districts to form Boards of Cooperative Services (BOCS's). The growth of BOCS's since 1965 has been substantial, resulting in a near statewide system of seventeen BOC's in operation

in July, 1973. All but nineteen of the state's 181 local school districts are members of a BOCS. The geographic boundaries of the State's BOCS's are shown in Figure 8.

In addition to local school districts, BOCS's may now include community and technical colleges, junior college districts and state-supported institutions of higher learning. This amendment to the original 1965 legislation was enacted in 1973. Two other significant amendments passed earlier this year 1) provided that only the seventeen multi-purpose BOCS's in operation in the 1972-73 school year would be eligible for a new state appropriation; and 2) required that BOCS's serve school districts having a minimum of at least four thousand students in grades K-12, inclusive.

BOCS's are governed by a board composed of members appointed by constituent local school district boards of education. The governing boards must have at least five members and each participating local school district must have a minimum of one representative. The governing boards of the units have authority to appoint their chief administrative officer.

The BOCS's do not have taxing authority. As established previously, they presently are eligible to receive state appropriations. The bulk of their financial resources are derived, however, from service contracts with participating institutions. Many of the units are also deeply engaged in the administration of federal programs. The units are eligible to hold title to real property.

The principal programming thrusts of Colorado's regional educational service agencies are:

1. staff development programs for teachers, administrators and support service staffs;

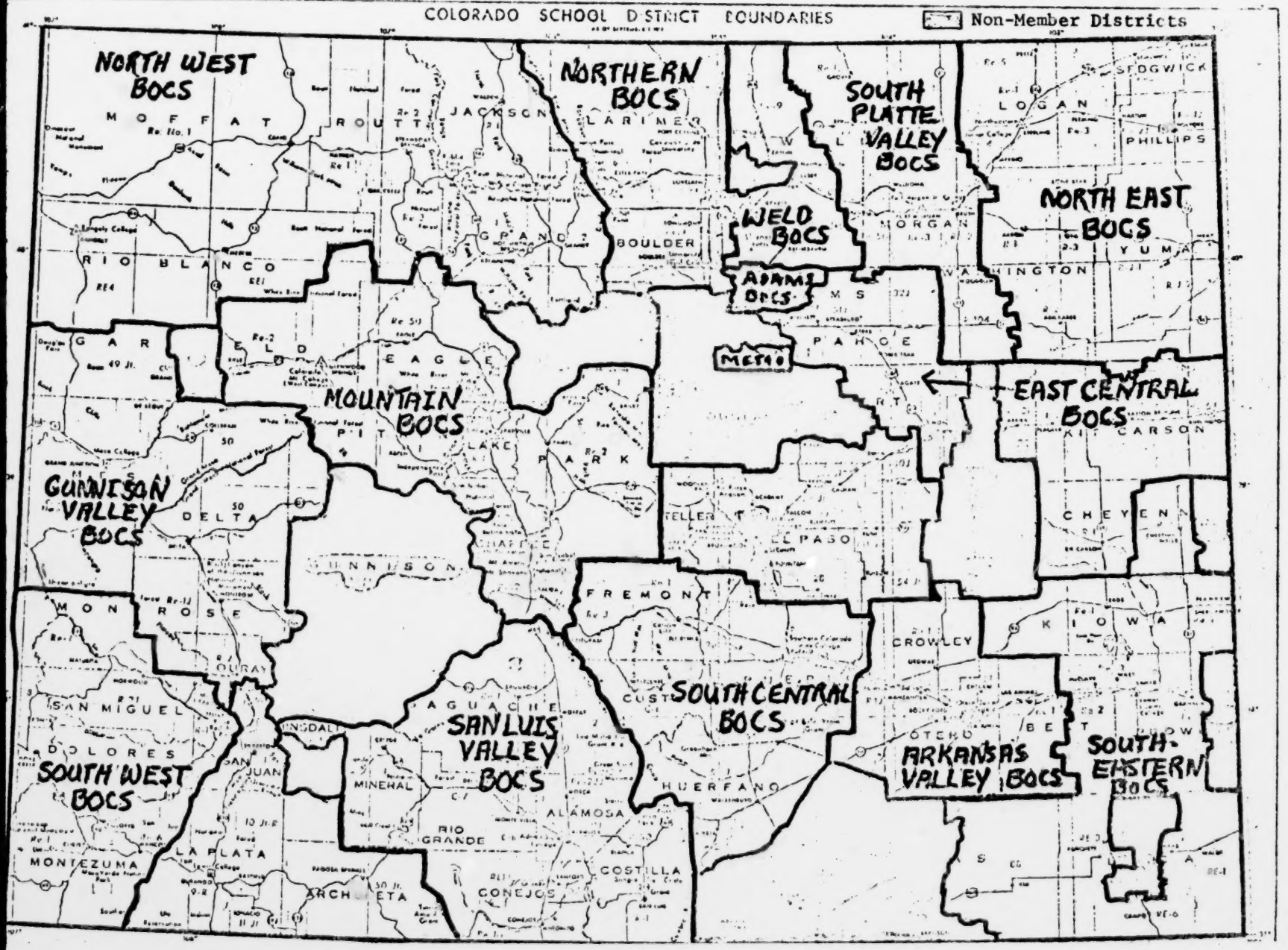


FIGURE 8

APPROXIMATE BOUNDARIES OF COLORADO'S BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE SERVICES, July 1973

2. programs and services for exceptional children;

3. administrative services (e.g., teacher recruitment, cooperative purchasing); and,

4. educational media programs and services.

The rapid growth of BOCS's in Colorado is due in large measure to the commitment of the state education agency to promote this concept as a viable approach for the improvement of educational opportunities of children and youth, particularly those residing in non-metropolitan areas. Perhaps the greatest evidence of this commitment is the designation and assignment of key staff of the agency to promote the development of BOCS's and monitor their administration and operation.

Iowa.[23] In 1965 the state legislation enacted permissive legislation allowing two or more adjacent county school systems to merge by concurrent action of county boards of education. Passage of this legislation made possible the formation of multi-county regional educational service agencies in Iowa, known legally as Joint County School Systems (JCSS's).

In July, 1973, ten Joint County School Systems were in operation, embracing 30 of the state's former 99 single-county school systems. Four of the ten JCSS's are two-county units, four are three-county units, one is a four-county operation and the remaining unit is a six-county organization. The geographic boundaries of the ten units are shown in Figure 9.

In addition to the ten JCSS's, 18 superintendents of county school systems serve as the chief administrative officer of two or more single county school systems under contractual agreements between the participating county boards of education. The geographic boundaries of both the ten Joint County School Systems and the single county school system arrangements for

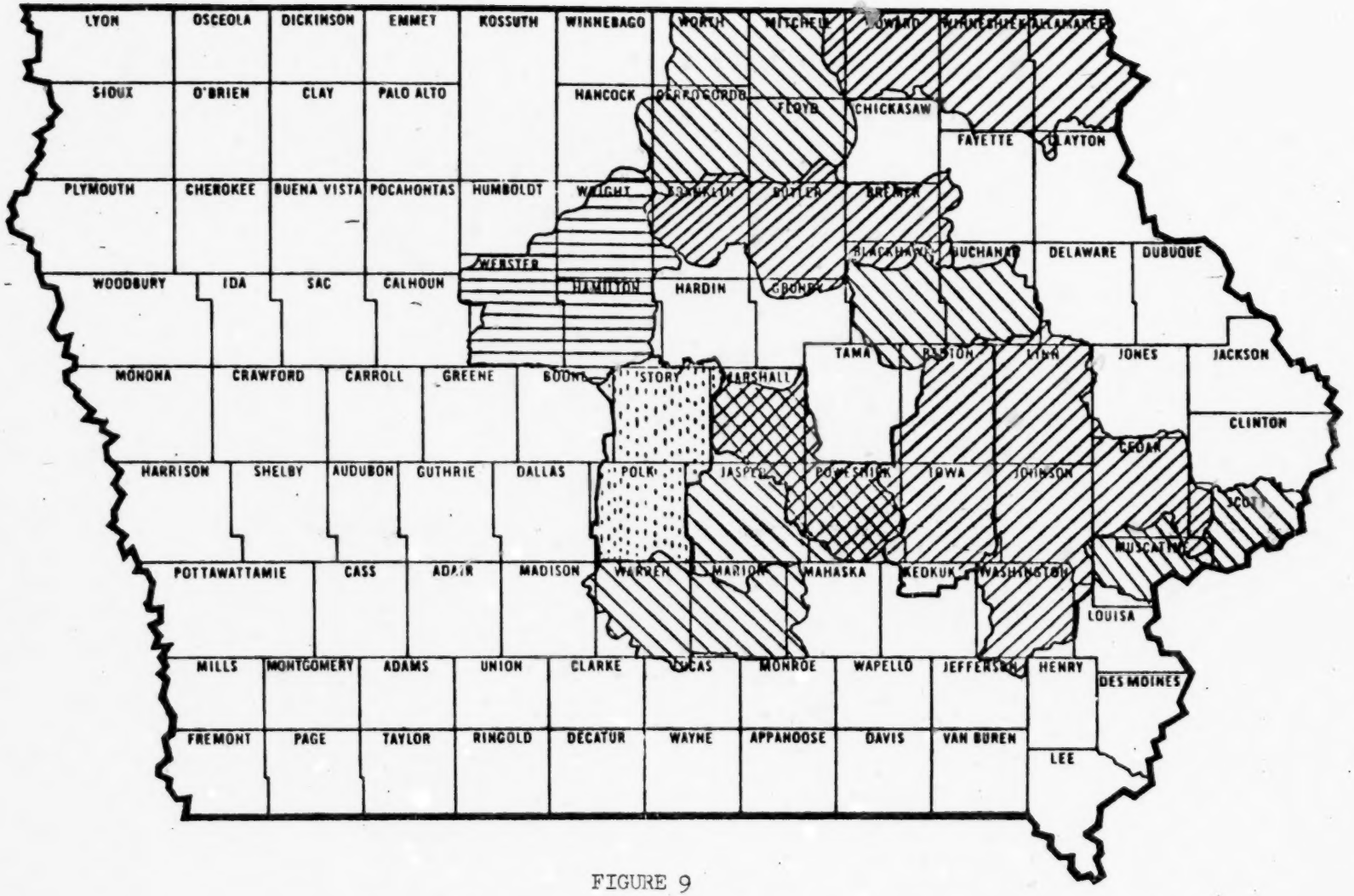


FIGURE 9

APPROXIMATE BOUNDARIES OF IOWA'S JOINT COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS, July 1973

the employment of a single administrator tend to be consistent, through a policy decision by the State Board of Public Instruction, with the statewide network of regional multi-county area vocational-technical and area community college districts formed in the 1965 to 1967 period.

The JCSS's are governed by a seven-member, popularly elected board. The governing board has many of the same powers and responsibilities as single county school systems, including the authority to employ its chief administrative official.

The units are financed from a variety of sources. Until recently they enjoyed complete fiscal independence and could levy any amount of tax necessary to maintain their programs. However, a ceiling of three mills was placed on the units in 1971. The JCSS's also make use of service contracts with participating local school districts. In addition, virtually all of the units typically annually have federal programming commitments. The agencies do not have authority to hold title to real property.

The programming thrusts of the state's ten JCSS's are:

1. programs and services for exceptional children;
2. subject matter curriculum consultant services;
3. educational data processing services; and,
4. educational media programs and services.

The heavy involvement of the state's JCSS's in educational media programs and services is due largely to a decision by the State Board of Public Instruction in 1966 to regionalize the administration of Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, enacted the previous year. The state education agency also contributed significantly to the development of a viable regional educational service agency by promoting the use of JCSS's in the administration of Title III of the same Act.

Michigan.[24] In 1962, the Michigan legislature eliminated all single county school systems and established in their place Intermediate School Districts (ISD's). The new ISD's had the same rights and responsibilities of the former county units but were charged with additional programming functions, notably the provision of special education and vocational-technical education services to local school districts.

The new legislation, which became effective in 1963, mandated that all new ISD's must have a minimum enrollment of 5,000 students. As a result of this requirement and some voluntary mergers of ISD's, the state in 1971 had fifteen multi-county Intermediate School Districts. Nine of the fifteen were two-county in region, four were three-county, one embraced a four-county region, and the remaining multi-county unit comprised a five-county region. The remaining ISD's in Michigan were single county units. The geographic boundaries of the ISD's are shown in Figure 10.

The ISD's are governed by a popularly elected board. The board has the authority to appoint its chief administrative officer. The units have limited categorical fiscal authority to levy taxes for special education and vocational-technical education. They receive state appropriations and a majority of them typically administer extensive federal programs.

The dominant programming thrusts of Michigan's regional educational service agencies are:

1. comprehensive programs and services for exceptional children;
2. comprehensive vocational-technical programs;
3. subject matter curriculum consultant services;
4. data processing services; and,
5. educational media programs and consultant services.

FIGURE 10

BOUNDARIES OF MICHIGAN'S INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS, July 1973

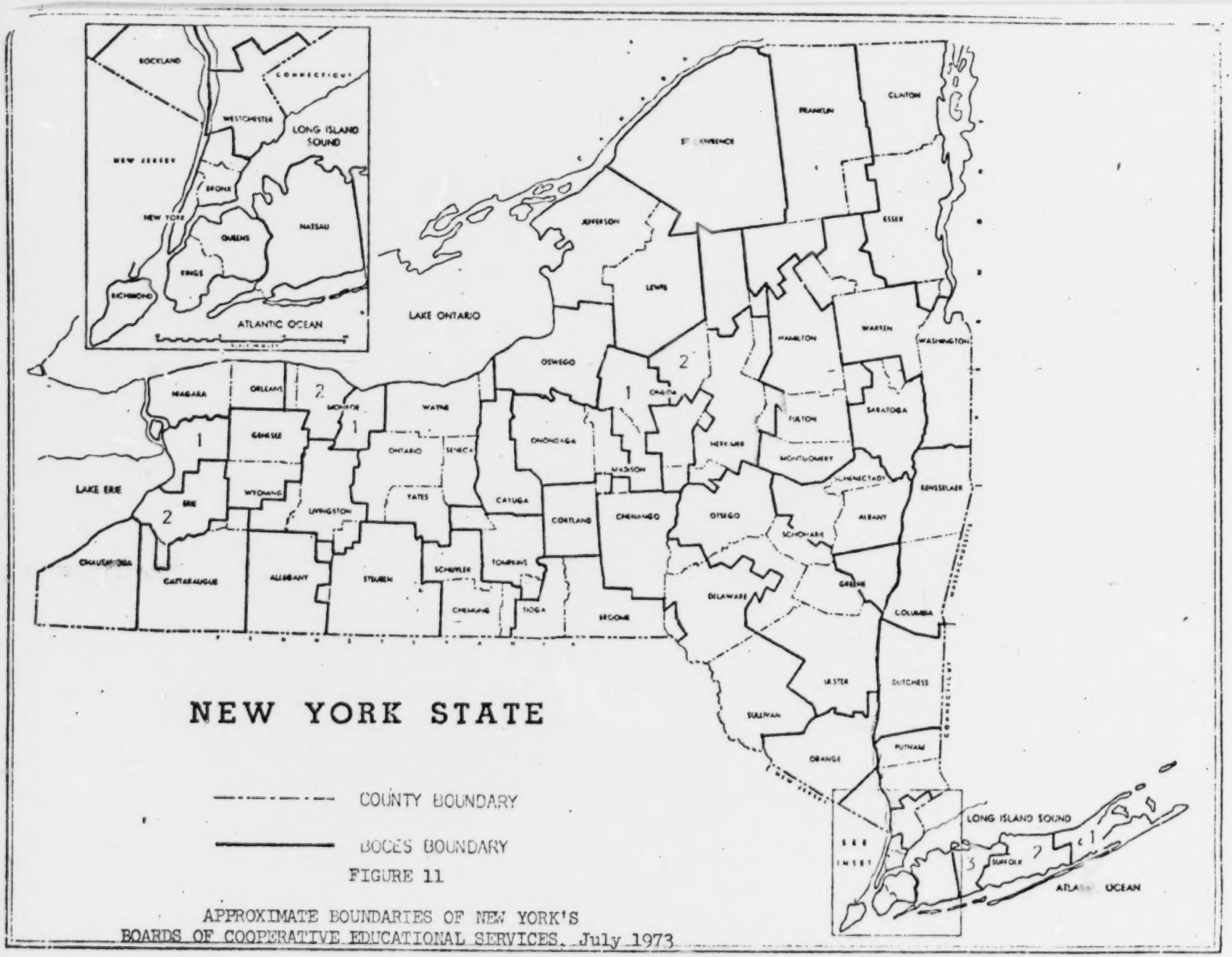
Some of the most comprehensive and sophisticated regional educational service agency operations to be found anywhere in the nation are located in Michigan, particularly those functioning in the metropolitan Detroit area.

The ISD's also perform numerous regulatory and administrative functions for the state education agency such as enforcement of financial accounting and auditing arrangements governing local school district operation, enforcement of compulsory attendance laws and planning for school district reorganization.

New York.[25] Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES's) were established in 1948. In July, 1973, 47 units were in operation. Local school district membership in a BOCES is voluntary. All but seventeen of the state's local education agencies, exclusive of the five largest urban school systems who are statutorially denied membership, presently belong to a BOCES. Thus, as shown in Figure 11, the state has almost a statewide network of regional educational service agencies. Unlike a majority of other statewide systems, however, the New York State system does not tend to adhere closely to the political boundaries of the state's counties.

The units are governed by a five to nine member board whose members are elected at an annual convention of boards of member local school districts. The convention is free to elect a member or non-member of a local district. The governing board has the authority to appoint its chief administrative officer, the District Superintendent, subject to the approval of the State Commissioner of Education. The District Superintendent is legally and operationally defined as a state officer.

BOCES's, which have no taxing authority, are financed from a variety of sources. A relatively generous state appropriation for special shared



NEW YORK STATE

COUNTY BOUNDARY

BOCES BOUNDARY

FIGURE 11

APPROXIMATE BOUNDARIES OF NEW YORK'S
BOARDS OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, July 1973

services provides substantial operating monies. Service contracts with local school districts also constitute a significant base of support. In addition, each local school district is annexed a pro rata amount to cover the administrative costs of its BOCES. Virtually all BOCES's typically receive additional financial support as a result of federal projects administered by the units. BOCES's can hold title to real property and are permitted to construct physical facilities subject to prior approval by public referendum.

BOCES's may offer relatively unlimited programs and services to their constituent districts provided that the service is requested by at least two member systems and approval is granted from the state education agency. Local school district participation is on a voluntary basis.

The programming thrusts of BOCES's are:

1. itinerant teacher services (e.g., music, art, driver education, reading);
2. comprehensive programs and services for exceptional children (e.g., gifted, speech and hearing correction, emotionally disturbed, physically handicapped, mentally handicapped);
3. pupil personnel programs and services (e.g., guidance and counseling, dental hygiene, psychological and psychiatric services);
4. comprehensive administrative and management programs and services (e.g., data processing, planning and evaluation, research, teacher recruitment and certification);
5. comprehensive vocational-technical programs and services;
6. comprehensive educational media services (e.g., centralized

film libraries, instructional media centers, media consultant services); and,

7. comprehensive staff development programs.

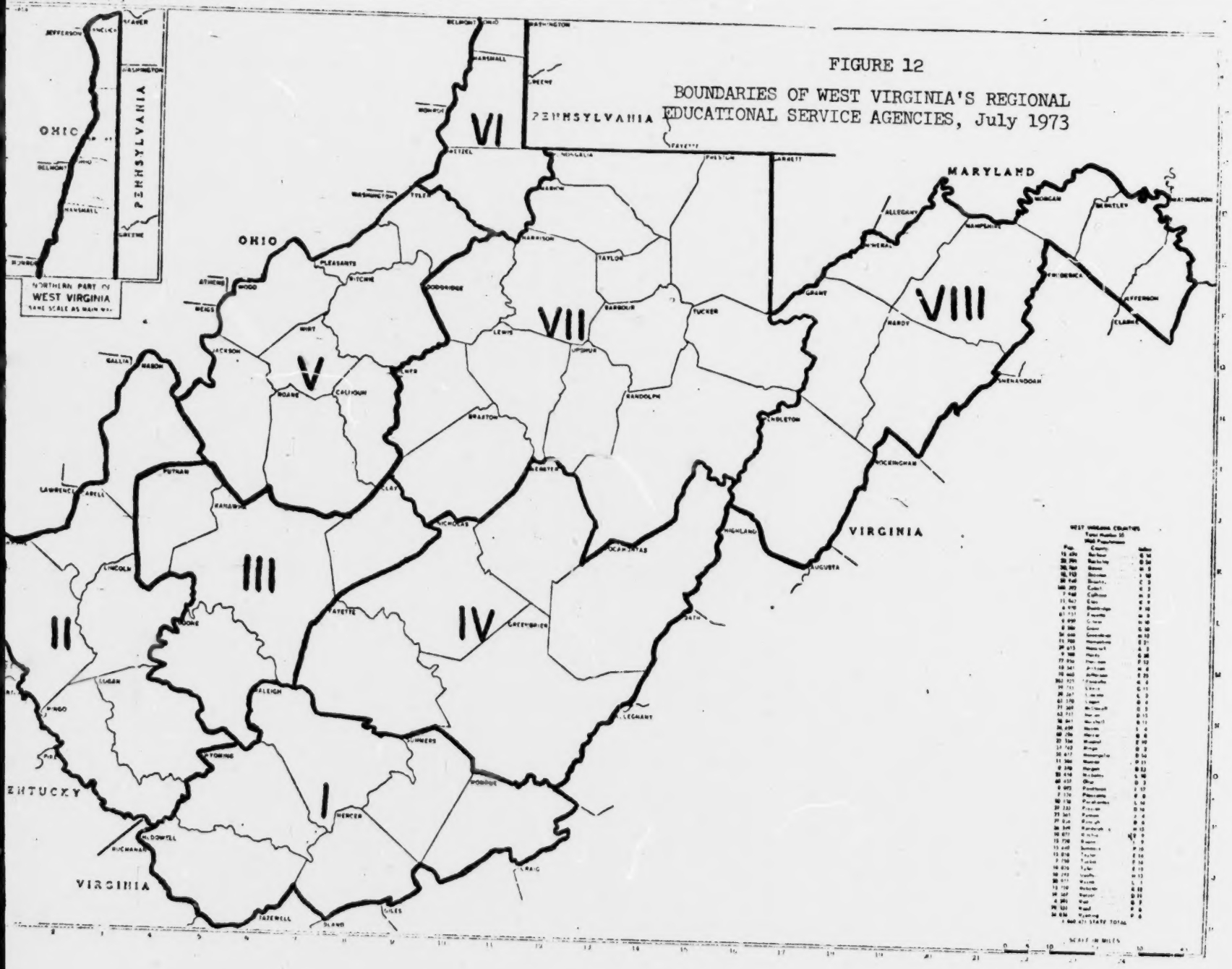
As was true of the regional educational service agency arrangement in Texas, the BOCES's in New York State are closely linked operationally and administratively to the state education agency, thur promoting statewide planning and communication to virtually all elements of the state school system and state government generally. A very delicate form of federalism has been established with a relatively sophisticated check and balance system. Improved planning and implementation of statewide and regional goals is thus substantially promoted.

West Virginia.[26] In 1972 the state legislature enacted Senate Bill 183 authorizing the State Board of Education to establish multi-county Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA's) for the purpose of providing educational programs and services to local school districts. The State Board of Education was also authorized to adopt policies and rules and regulations for the operation of RESA's. Subsequently, the state established a statewide network of eight such units. In September, 1973, five of the proposed eight units were operative. The geographic boundaries of the RESA's are shown in Figure 12.

The RESA units are governed by a board having two representatives from each member local school district, the superintendent of schools and one member of the governing board. In addition, one voting member appointed by the State Superintendent of Schools serves on the RESA governing board. The RESA unit may also choose to permit representation of participating non-educational agencies to be either voting or non-voting members of its

FIGURE 12

BOUNDARIES OF WEST VIRGINIA'S REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES, July 1973



board or it may elect to establish functional advisory councils having representation from both educational and non-educational agencies. The governing board has authority to appoint its chief administrative official, the Executive Director.

The units are financed from a variety of sources. While they have no taxing authority, they do receive state appropriations and are eligible to receive federal monies. In addition, they can enter into service contracts with constituent local school districts. As established by state policy, the fiscal agent for the RESA is one of the participating local school districts.

The parameters of the major programming missions of the RESA are also established by state policy. They include the following:

1. administrative services (e.g., educational planning, cooperative purchasing, computer services);
2. curricular services (e.g., subject matter consultants, auxiliary personnel, demonstration services);
3. media services (e.g., regional film library, educational and public television, audiovisual production and utilization;) and,
4. instructional services (e.g., psychological services, diagnostic services and programs for exceptional children).

Group Three: The Strengthening of the Service Role of Existing Middle Echelon Units

As established previously, a large number of states have historically operated a three-echelon state school system. In the approximate period

1960 to the present, considerable activity occurred with regard to the middle echelon unit of school government in those states having a three-echelon history. Also as previously described, some states chose to legislatively mandate a new form of regional educational service agency to replace their existing middle echelon unit (e.g., Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin). Other states having a middle echelon unit encouraged the reconstitution of their units through the passage of new enabling legislation allowing two or more middle echelon units to merge (e.g., Iowa, Michigan), or the strengthening of existing permissive legislation (e.g., New York).

Since the early 1960's, still other states having a three-echelon history have altered the primary mission of their middle units from that which was traditionally one of providing regulatory or administrative functions for the state education agency or having a mix of service functions to local school districts and providing regulatory or administrative functions, to one which is clearly that of a service agency. While many states have engaged in this movement, the most significant efforts have occurred in the four states of California, Illinois, Ohio and Oregon.[27] In all four states, the statewide network of middle echelon units is the county school system.

A number of common patterns in the reconstitution movements in the four states are evident. Chief among these are:

1. the development and almost regularized reaffirmation of consensus among key influentials in the state educational policy-making structure (e.g., state legislative and executive branches of government, professional interest

groups) of a need for a new form of delivery system to provide specialized and high cost educat onal programs and services, particularly in the non-metropolitan areas of the state;

2. the commitment by the state education agency to improve the capabilities of their existing middle-echelon units to deliver comprehensive programs and services to constituent local school districts; and,
3. the emergence of the county school system as one of the principal administrative agencies for the management of the tremendous increase in federal educational support, particularly programs eminating from Titles I, II, III and VI of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965.

Group Four: The Development of Multi-Purpose Educational Cooperatives[28]

In the late 1960's, the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., and the Appalachia Regional Commission (ARC) began to promote the development of multi-purpose educational cooperatives in the thirteen member states of the ARC. In that two of the thirteen states, New York and Pennsylvania, already had in place regional educational service agencies, the focus of interest of the ARC was in the Appalachian regions of the states of Maryland, West Virginia, Ohio, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi.

The development of educational cooperatives has progressed at various rates and diverse forms in the eleven states. The concept has made rapid

progress in Georgia and West Virginia, as previously established. In Tennessee, five educational cooperatives were in operation in July of this year. North Carolina has operated two demonstration cooperatives for several years. These units are financed in part by the state education agency and their chief administrative officers are state employees. South Carolina presently has one multi-purpose educational cooperative as does Maryland, Alabama and Mississippi. Two cooperatives are presently in operation in Virginia and Ohio. The state education agency in Kentucky funds and operates four educational cooperatives.

A dominant organizational characteristic of a majority of the educational cooperatives emerging in the Appalachian states is the close geographic proximity of the service agencies and the sub-state regional and local planning and development districts formed in the same regions to promote economic development and coordinate the administration of state and federal programs.

While the existing programming thrust of a substantial majority of the educational cooperatives is presently merger, a majority of these units are nonetheless viewed to be multi-purpose regional educational service agencies. Another common organizational function of a majority of the cooperatives is the purely voluntary participation feature of the operations. And, finally, none of the units has taxing authority.

DOMINANT ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS IN STATEWIDE AND PARTIAL STATEWIDE SYSTEMS OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Introduction

This section of the report will focus on the dominant organizational patterns of regional educational service agencies in the eleven states which have either legislatively mandated a statewide network of units or have enacted enabling legislation allowing the formation of such units. Excluded from consideration here are the organizational patterns of the four states which have substantially altered the service role of their existing RESA units and those of the multi-purpose educational cooperatives developing in other states. The rationale for exclusion of the latter two forms of RESA units is as follows: in the case of the substantial restructuring of the county school systems in the four states that have selected their alternative, no fundamental organizational modifications have been made in recent years in the historical posture of these units; and, in the case of the newly created multi-purpose educational cooperatives, great variations presently exist in the developmental stages of these units, thus inhibiting the identification of dominant organizational patterns at this point in history.

The organizational characteristics used to illustrate the dominant organizational patterns for the first two types of regional educational service agency developments are:

1. minimum or maximum enrollment size specified in legislation;
2. method of selection of governing board;

3. number of members of governing board;
4. method of selection of chief administrative officer;
5. aspects of the financial support base of the units;
6. authority to hold title to real property;
7. statutorially required budget review by constituent local school districts;
8. statutorially required advisory committee of representation of constituent local school districts;
9. line association with state education agency;
10. performance of regulatory and administrative function for state education agencies; and,
11. required membership of local school districts.

Additional organizational characteristics having a programmatic orientation will be highlighted in the following section of the paper which focuses on dominant programming patterns of regional educational service agencies.

Dominant Organizational Patterns of RESA's in the Legislatively Mandated States

Selected organizational characteristics of regional educational service agencies in the six states which have statutorially mandated their establishment are shown in Table 6. The dominant patterns of these units are:

1. three of the six states have no statutorially specified minimum or maximum enrollment size of their units. In the remaining states, minimums are stated rather than maximums. Further, the

TABLE 6

SUMMARY OF SELECTED ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SIX LEGISLATIVELY MANDATED STATEWIDE NETWORKS OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES, July 1973

Selected Characteristics	Georgia	Nebraska
Year Established	1972	1965
Name of Unit	Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA)	Educational Service Unit (ESU)
Number of Units	18 planned (16 in operation in 1973-74)	19
Minimum or Maximum Enrollment Size Specified in Legislation	None specified	None specified (minimum of 10,000 students used as guide)
Method of Selection of Governing Board	Appointment by local school district boards of education	Popular election
Number of Members of Governing Board	1 each participating local school district	1 each member county plus 4 at-large
Method of Selection of Chief Administrator	Appointment by CESA governing board	Appointment by ESU governing board
Financial Support Base/		
Taxing authority	no	yes (1 mill limit)
State appropriation	yes	yes
Service contract	yes	yes
Eligibility for federal grants	yes	yes
Authority to Hold Title to Real Property	no	yes
Statutorially Required Budget Review by Constituent Local School Districts	no	no
Statutorially Required Advisory Committee of Representatives of Constituent Local School Districts	no	no
Line Association with State Education Association	yes	yes
Perform Regulatory and Administrative Functions in State Education Agency	no	yes
All Local School Districts Required to be Members of RESA's	no	yes

Pennsylvania	Texas	Washington	Wisconsin
1971	1967	1969	1965
Intermediate Unit (IU)	Educational Service Center (ESC)	Intermediate School District (ISD)	Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA)
29	20	12	19
None specified	Minimum of 50,000 students	Minimum of 20,000 students	Minimum of 25,000 students
Elected by convention of members of local school district boards	Elected by advisory committee of member local school district boards & 4-year institutions	Popular election	Appointment by local school district boards of education
13 - at least 1 and no more than one from each local school district	5 or 7	7 or 9	1 each member local school district
Appointment by IU governing board	Appointment by ESC governing board	Appointment by ISD governing board	Appointment by CESA governing board
no	no	no	no
yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	no	no
yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes	yes

minimums cited tend to be lower than the consensus view expressed in the literature for the period when the statewide networks were formulated;[29]

2. a clear pattern exists regarding the selection of the governing boards of the regional units. While some variations exist in the specific manner of selection, constituent local school districts play a vital role in the selection process in four of the six states;
3. while the size of membership of the governing boards varies, the dominant pattern emerging is that each constituent local school district be represented;
4. consistent with accepted educational practice, the chief administrative officials of the regional units in all of the states are appointed by the governing boards of the units;
5. clear patterns are also evident regarding selected aspects of the financial support base of the units. In only one of the six states, Nebraska, do regional units enjoy an important dimension of fiscal independence--the authority to levy taxes for the support of the unit. The predominant sources of revenue for the agencies in each of the states are service contracts, state appropriations and federal program participation;
6. regional units in one-half of the six states have authority to hold title to real property. Thus, with

regard to regional units, there appears to be no relationship between tax levying authority and permission to hold title to real property, a conventional complementary association in school government generally;

7. a clear pattern is emerging with regard to the statewide requirement that constituent local school districts exercise review authority over the budget of the service agency. Four of the six states require some form of budgetary review;
8. a closely related tren is evident in the statutory requirement that the .egional units in the same four states establish some form of advisory body representative of constituent local districts;
9. while considerable variation exists in all six of the states, the regional educational service agencies clearly have a line association with the state education agency. This association varies from weak linkage (e.g., designation as a corporate body) to a much stronger relationship (e.g., performance of regulatory functions for the state education agency, program and budget review by the state education agency, receipt of state appropriations); and,
10. in five of the six states, all except Georgia, all local school districts within the geographic boundaries of a regional educational service agency are legally required

to be a member of the unit. This is not to say, however, that they are required to participate in the programs and services of the service agency.

Dominant Organizational Patterns of RESA's in the Permissive States

Selected organizational patterns of regional educational service agencies in the five states which have enacted permissive legislation allowing for their formation are shown in Table 7. The dominant patterns of these units are:

1. while a minimum enrollment size is statutorially prescribed in only two of the five states, where a figure is cited it is considerably smaller for regional units established under permissive legislation than for those formulated through legislative mandate;
2. consistent with regional units operating in statutorially mandated states, those functioning under permissive legislation either select their governing boards by popular election or by appointment by representatives of constituent local school districts. Further, the size of membership of the governing boards of permissive RESA's tends to be similar to those which are statutorially formed. And, similarities exist between the two types of RESA's regarding the selection process of the chief administrative official

TABLE 7

SUMMARY OF SELECTED ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STATES HAVING PERMISSIVE LEGISLATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES, July 1973

elected Characteristics	Iowa	Michigan
ear Enabling Legislation nacted	1965	1962
ame of Unit	Joint County School Systems (JCSS)	Intermediate School Districts (ISD)
umber of Units	10	59
inimum or Maximum rollment Size Specified n Legislation	None specified	Minimum of 5,000 students K-12, inclusive
ethod of Selection of overning Board	Popular election	Popular election
mber of Members of overning Board	7	5 or 7
thod of Selection of ief Administrator	Appointment by JCSS governing board	Appointment by ISD governing board
nancial Support Base/		
Taxing authority	yes	yes (categorical)
State appropriation	yes	yes
Service contract	yes	yes
Eligibility for federal grants	yes	yes
thority to Hold Title Real Property	no	no
atutorially Required Budget view by Constituent Local hool Districts	no	no
atutorially Required Advisory mmittee of Representatives of nstituent Local School Districts	no	no
e Association with State cation Association	yes	yes
form Regulatory and Adminis- ative Functions in State cation Agency	yes	yes
l Local School Districts quired to be Members of RESA's	yes	yes

TABLE 7 (Cont.)

New York 1948	Colorado 1965	West Virginia 1972
Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)	Board of Cooperative Services (BOCS)	Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA)
47	17	8 (5 in operation 1973-74)
None specified	Minimum of 4,000 students, K-12, inclusive	None specified
Election by convention of members of local school district boards	Appointment by local school district bo boards of education	Appointment by local school district boards of education
5	1 each participating local school district-minimum of 5	2 each participating local school district
Appointment by BOCES governing board and approval by State Commission of Education	Appointment by BOCS governing board	Appointment by RESA governing board
no	no	no
yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	yes
yes	yes	not specified
yes	no	no
yes	no	no
yes	yes	yes
yes	no	no
yes	no	yes

in all but one state. The exception is New York State where the chief administrative official must be approved by the state education agency, consistent with provision that this official is in fact a state official;

3. the fiscal posture of RESA units functioning under permissive legislation appears to be similar to those operating under mandated arrangements as reflected in the four fiscal indices considered in this report. A similar pattern exists concerning the authority to hold title to real property;
4. substantial differences exist between the two types of regional units, however, with regard to the role of constituent local districts in the budgetary review process and in the advisory function. In only New York State is there a requirement that constituent local school districts participate in these two roles;
5. as was true of regional units in the mandated states, all of the units in four of the five states, all except West Virginia, have a line association with the state education agency and have differences in the strength of these linkages; and,
6. in four of the five states, all except Colorado, all local school districts within the geographic boundaries of a regional unit are legally required to be a member

of the unit, although participation in programs and services is generally voluntary.

Other Observations

A number of other observations regarding organizational patterns of regional educational service agencies of either the mandated or permissive type are also offered. These are:

1. The use of mandatory legislation appears to be gaining in usage in recent years. That is, in four of the five states utilizing the permissive alternative, action occurred prior to the close of 1965. Conversely, all six of the states utilizing the mandating approach did so since 1965.
2. There appears to be some evidence, although meager at present, that the geographic boundaries of regional units of both types either adhere to the approximate geographic boundaries established for the administration and operation of other federal and state programs (e.g., the Georgia case, the Texas case) or that the geographic boundaries established for RESA units serve as the approximate boundaries for other federal and state programs (e.g., the Iowa case).

DOMINANT PROGRAMMING PATTERNS IN STATEWIDE AND PARTIAL STATEWIDE SYSTEMS OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Introduction

This section of the paper will focus on the dominant programming patterns of regional educational service agencies in the eleven states which have either legislatively mandated a statewide network of units or have enacted permissive legislation allowing the establishment of such units. As was true of the description of the dominant organizational patterns presented in the preceeding section, the development of regional units in the two types of legislative frameworks is sufficiently old enough in time and sufficiently widespread to permit programmatic characteristics and trends to be observed by the student of school government.

Dominant Programming Patterns of RESA's in the Legislatively Mandated States

The major programming thrusts of regional units in the six legislatively mandated statewide networks are the following:

1. legislatively prescribed programs and services, while relatively extensive in many of the states, appear to be confined to the performance of ministerial and administrative functions for the state education agency (e.g., financial accounting for local school districts, enforcement of compulsory attendance laws, local school district needs assessment, programs and services for exceptional children). Furthermore, in many of the

states where programming prescriptions are legislatively established they tend to be substantially similar to those formally assumed by the middle ecnelon unit replaced by the new RESA unit, as might be expected in any major structural transition of a state school system;

2. a common legislative reference is that programs and services implemented by regional educational service agencies be based on a study of the needs of the constituent local school districts and that representatives of constituent units be either deeply involved in the planning of programs and services or have final review authority on programming decisions;
3. another common statutory requirement is that the state education agency hold final review over the programming practices of regional educational service units and that in the exercise of this authority use be made, albeit slight, of cost-benefit and cost-effectiveness principles and techniques;
4. regardless of source of impetus, legislative mandate or needs of constituent local school districts as perceived by the personnel of the service units, constituent local districts or the state education agency, regional educational service agencies in the six states situated in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan settings have developed a clear, common programming

posture. The common elements of this profile are the following: (a) comprehensive programs and services for exceptional children in virtually all states; (b) comprehensive educational media programs and services in virtually all of the units; (c) curriculum subject matter consultant services in a majority of the units; (d) comprehensive data processing services in many of the units; and, (e) staff development activities in a majority of the units. An inventory of illustrative programs and services provided by regional units is provided in Appendix B;

5. clear distinctions are evident, however, in the programming patterns of metropolitan and non-metropolitan oriented regional service agencies, as might be expected. Whereas the programming missions of regional units serving in non-metropolitan settings tends to follow those established previously, the programs and services of metropolitan oriented units are, in addition, highly comprehensive and diverse. Indeed, every conceivable type of educational program is offered somewhere in the nation by metropolitan oriented RESA units. And it is in the nation's metropolitan oriented RESA units where the greatest sophistication of staffing and operation can occur most regularly (e.g., diagnostic learning capabilities, diagnostic and clinical centers for the identification and programming for severly mentally and

physically handicapped children, high quality planning and research and evaluation services);

6. the previously cited common programming profiles of both metropolitan and non-metropolitan oriented regional educational service agencies have one or more of the following common features: (a) the requirement of a high degree of staff specialization; (b) the requirement of a high degree of specialization of facilities and equipment; (c) the requirement of substantial start-up and operation costs; and, (d) in the case of programs and services for exceptional children, low student prevalency ratios; and,
7. a substantial majority of the RESA units regularly have a substantial federal programming commitment. In a majority of states, the state education agency has officially or quasi-officially provided incentives for the deep involvement of regional educational service agencies in federal programming.

Dominant Programming Patterns of RESA's in the Permissive States

Little substantive distinction exists in the programming patterns of regional units in the six states operating under statutory mandate summarized above and those in states functioning under permissive legislative frameworks.

Other Observations

A number of other observations regarding programming patterns of regional educational service agencies of either the mandated or permissive are also offered. These are:

1. while not widespread, there appears to be increasing programming relationships between regional units and institutions of higher education. In one of these states, Texas, an organizational linkage is required, thus promoting some program planning and operational relationship. In another of the states, Colorado, selected post-secondary institutions have recently been identified as eligible members of the regional units. Beyond these two developments, however, regional units appear to be increasingly voluntarily engaging in cooperative activity with higher education institutions. The thrusts of these efforts to date appear to be in the area of joint staffing for curriculum and staff development, the joint operation of educational media services, and joint areawide planning activities;
2. also while not widespread, there appears to be an increasing relationship between regional units and other local and regional governmental subdividions and private and quasi-private social and welfare agencies. This increasing activity, where it exists, at present tends to be limited to joint regional planning and

regional needs assessments, and appears to be a direct outgrowth of the previously identified organizational pattern evident in selected states requiring regional educational service agencies and sub-state regions identified for federal and state programming to be geographically coterminous;

3. a number of regional units, especially those located in metropolitan settings, appear to be philosophically and operationally committed to the "spin-off" concept. That is, a deliberate attempt is made by the regional unit to be responsible for the initiation and testing of a program or service and then revert the management of the activity back to the local district once the district possesses the competencies and willingness to do so;

4. the participation of the large core local school district in the programs and services of metropolitan regional educational service agencies appears to be increasing. The impetus for this trend appears to be related to increasing external incentives for participation (state and federal programming requirements) and a revived realization of the interrelationship of urban suburban districts. Whatever its cause, the participation of the central city school district is typically limited to those marked by a high degree of specialization of staff and/or facilities and equipment (e.g., computer

services, educational television;[30] and,

5. while the distinction is not always clear, some of the regional units tend to engage in only programs and services which are directed toward constituent local school districts as a corporate body. Others have a mix of programs and services for students as well as for the district itself. This distinction, where it exists, does not appear to be based on clear legislative guidelines or directives of the state education agency. Rather, it appears to be based on the prevailing needs of a particular setting and the traditional relationship between the service unit and its constituency.

RECOMMENDED CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT, GOVERNANCE, ORGANIZATION, AND OPERATION OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Introduction

It is the purpose of this section of the paper to identify recommended criteria for the establishment and operation of effective regional educational service agencies. The recommended criteria have been grouped into the following seven categories: (1) establishment; (2) governance and organization; (3) area to be served; (4) programs and services; (5) staffing arrangements; (6) financial structure; and, (7) physical facility arrangements.[31]

The criteria to be cited are based on a number of factors, chief among which are the following: (1) a review of the literature on regionalism in education; (2) an extended study by the writer of different forms of regionalism in education as it is developing in the several states, including on-site visitations and study of a large number of operating units throughout the nation; (3) the application of administrative theory and principles of organizational development having particular significance for public corporations of a service nature; and, (4) a philosophical commitment to basic principles of federalism in the organization and administration of a state school system, a central aspect of which is a deep belief that the local school district should remain as the primary unit of school government.

It is to be emphasized initially that while the criteria cited represent sound educational and administrative practice, no single set of criteria can be utilized universally in all state school system settings. This is so because the characteristics of state school systems differ

substantially in many important ways as do the needs of local school districts within the state. It follows, then, that while a consensus has emerged concerning general criteria for the structuring of regional educational service agencies, the development of specific standards must ultimately be achieved on an individual state basis.[32]

The guidelines which follow reflect a desire to operationalize the following briefly summarized key concepts:

1. the need to protect the autonomy of constituent local school districts within the framework of the larger question of the state's fundamental authority over education and its responsibility to provide equal educational opportunities of high quality for all;
2. the need to maximize the accountability of the regional units to their constituent districts and to the state education agency;
3. the need to provide the semi-autonomous regional units and the state education agency with desirable and necessary programming and organizational flexibility;
4. the need to establish an effective linkage system and and adequate check and balance system between the three principal components of the state school system--the local school district, the regional unit and the state education agency; and,
5. the need to remove legal and operational constraints which inhibit the closer cooperation and coordination among units of school government and between units of

school government and general government and the private sector.

Establishment

It is recommended that:

1. the state education agency initiate a comprehensive statewide study of highlighting the needs of local school districts within the state, the role and function of all existing components in the state school system, alternative approaches for the improvement of local school district delivery systems, and a specific proposal for combining contiguous local districts into areas to be served by an individual RESA unit and a specific plan for a statewide network of RESA units;
2. all information regarding the state plan should be made available in the office of the local school district superintendents within the areas affected for a sufficient period of time prior to a public hearing called by the state education agency for the pupose of hearing testimony for and against the proposed RESA unit;
3. upon completion of the public hearings the board of the state education agency shall have the authority to approve or disapprove the proposed establishment of a RESA unit as proposed by the state education agency, modified by it on the basis of the previous scheduled

public hearings, or an alternative proposal submitted by representatives of a local school district;

4. the board of the state education agency should approve only those proposals submitted to it which satisfy the following criteria: (a) a public and nonpublic school enrollment in grades K-12, inclusive, sufficiently large to offer specialized programs and services efficiently and economically; (b) a financial base sufficiently large to offer specialized programs and services efficiently and economically; and, (c) an area sufficiently large in terms of resources and students to offer specialized programs and services efficiently and economically;[33]
5. within one year of the completion of the public hearings the board of the state education agency should submit its recommendations to the state legislature with the request that a statewide network of regional educational service agencies be mandated;
6. the enabling legislation should grant the governing board of the state education agency authority to develop departmental rules and regulations for the administration and operation of regional units;
7. the enabling legislation should specify that the state education agency conduct a comprehensive review of RESA units bi-annually; and,
8. the enabling legislation should specify that the state

legislative, in cooperation with the state education agency, conduct a comprehensive review of RESA units every five years.

Governance and Organization

It is recommended that:

1. RESA units be governed by a popularly elected board of directors of eleven members serving three-year terms. The territory of the unit should be divided into seven director districts as nearly as possible of equal population and contiguous territory. One member should be elected from each of the seven director districts and the remaining four members should be elected at-large. In extremely sparsley populated areas the total membership of the board should be reduced to a lesser, odd number. However, the ratio of representation from director districts and at-large should remain essentially the same;[34]
2. the governing board of the RESA unit should be empowered to develop its rules and regulations subject to policies of the board of the state education agency and/or state education agency and statutory and constitutional considerations;
3. the governing board of the RESA unit should have the authority to appoint a chief administrative officer for

an extended period, and upon his recommendation, approve the appointment of other personnel of the unit; and,

4. the governing board of the RESA units should be required to maintain one general advisory board composed of one representative appointed from each constituent local school district board and the chief administrative officer of each constituent district. The general advisory board should be statutorially granted authority to approve the budget of the regional unit.

Area to be Served

It is recommended that:

1. all local school districts in the state be included in a regional educational service agency; and,
2. the geographic boundaries of RESA units should adhere closely to the boundaries of other public sub-state regional planning and programming units where they are in existence.

Programs and Services

It is recommended that:

1. the basic programming orientation of RESA's should be in the provision of programs and services to constituent local school districts;
2. the governing board of the service unit should be

authorized to offer any educational program or services needed by constituent local school districts, subject to the approval of the state education agency;

3. all constituent local districts should be eligible for participation in the programs and services of the regional unit;
4. the governing board of the regional unit should have the authority to enter into contractual agreements with other public and private agencies for the purpose of providing programs and services to local school districts or the RESA unit, subject to the approval of the affected constituent local districts and the state education agency; and,
5. the services provided by regional units for the state education agency should be limited to data gathering functions and planning, communicative and disseminating functions and should exclude the performance of regulatory and ministerial functions which could potentially tend to place the unit in an adversary relationship with constituent local school districts.

Staffing Arrangements

It is recommended that:

1. the professional staff of the unit should meet the certification standards for their specialty established by the state education agency;

2. the governing board of the service unit should have the authority to employ non-educational/non-certified professional specialists subject to the approval of the state education agency;
3. the governing board of the service unit should have authority to enter into contractual agreements with other public agencies for the joint employment of personnel, subject to the approval of the state education agency; and,
4. the governing board of the service unit should have authority to enter into contractual agreements with private agencies for the joint employment of personnel, subject to the approval of the state education agency.

Financial Structure

It is recommended that:

1. the governing board of the RESA unit should be empowered to levy taxes on the taxable property of the area served, subject to the approval of the state education agency;
2. the governing board of the RESA unit should be eligible to receive state aid on an equalization basis;
3. the governing board of the RESA should be eligible to make application for and expend federal aid, subject to the approval of the state education agency; and,
4. the governing board of the RESA unit should be eligible to receive gifts and grants and expend such gifts and

grants in accordance with the terms of same so long as such terms comply with the constitution and statutes of the state, and the rules and regulations of the state education agency.

Physical Facility Arrangements

It is recommended that:

1. the governing board of the RESA units should have the authority to incur bonded indebtedness for the purpose of acquiring physical facilities to house the programs and services of the units, subject to the approval of a simple majority of the voting residents, and the state education agency;
2. the governing board of the RESA units should have the authority to acquire sites and to build, alter, and repair physical facilities to house the programs and services of the unit, subject to the approval of the state education agency;
3. the governing board of the RESA units should have authority to enter into lease-purchase agreements for the purpose of acquiring physical facilities to house the programs and services of the unit, subject to the approval of the state education agency;
4. the governing board of the units should have authority to jointly establish a building authority with other public agencies for the purpose of securing physical

facilities to house the programs and services of the unit, subject to the approval of a simple majority of voting residents and the state education agency; and,

5. the governing board of the RESA units should be eligible to receive state appropriations for physical facility construction and maintenance.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN THE ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR OVERCOMING OR MINIMIZING THEM

Introduction

A number of problems and issues concerning the establishment and operation of regional educational service agencies have emerged over time in the planning, development, implementation and operation of the concept. It is the purpose of this section of the paper to present a profile of the major issues and suggest meaningful strategies for eliminating or minimizing them.

The major problems and issues have been arbitrarily classified into the following three categories: (1) politically oriented issues; (2) administrative issues; and, (3) programming issues. It is to be recognized, of course, that many of the problems and issues cited in one of the categories overlap other categories selected for use here. However, the use of this scheme is helpful in both conceptualizing the nature of the issues and in identifying complete or partial solution strategies. It is also to be recognized that the strength of a particular issue or cluster of issues will vary appreciably in different state environment, state school system environments, and regional and local environments, particularly with regard to metropolitan and non-metropolitan settings. Brief reference to these variations will be made in the inventory of problems and issues.

Major Politically Oriented Issues

A large number of politically oriented issues have frequently been expressed in the planning, establishment and operation of regional educational service agencies.[35] The method of establishment of RESA units is the source of considerable debate, as might be expected. While the legislative mandate approach has been used more frequently in recent years, the permissive approach is generally viewed as more compatible with the concepts of self-determination and free choice. And this issue is even more compounded in the few states presently operating county school systems where the county superintendency is a constitutionally established office. Other dimensions of the issue of method of establishment in states presently operating a form of middle echelon unit relate to the complex question of how to absorb these existing units into a revised structural arrangement for the state school system. This issue is typically resolved, indeed, generally must be resolved, in the political arena, as is true of the other cited dimensions of the establishment question.

Another large cluster of politically oriented issues centers around the important question of providing a definite and reliable financial base for the proposed or operating regional unit. Chief among these concerns are the following issues, phrased in brief question form: Should RESA's enjoy complete or partial fiscal independence? If yes to either, will RESA units be engaged in unnecessary and wasteful competition with local school districts? The question of state appropriations for regional units also frequently generates the issue of competition with local school districts for scarce financial resources.

A third major politically oriented issue has to do with the concern that regional units are or potentially could be merely a device for the decentralization of the state education agency through the establishment of branches of the state agency in all regions, thus permitting the closer supervision and monitoring of local school districts. Regardless of the validity of this, regional educational service agencies are frequently viewed as a super board and a direct threat to the autonomy of the constituent local school districts.

Another cluster of concerns frequently expressed in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan settings is that regional units will make educational policy bodies more distant from the people and subsequently less accountable to them. In metropolitan areas, a closely related and frequently expressed concern is that the regional concept is merely a device to save the cities by shifting the deteriorating financial base of the cities to the frequently more wealthy suburban regions. Others view the establishment of metropolitan regional units as a facilitator for the desegregation of the large urban center. Still others perceive the regional concept as a scheme for diluting the political power of the core city.

A final major cluster of politically oriented concerns in virtually all states is that associated with the governmental reform movement generally. Many of these reform efforts center around the promotion of different forms of regionalism (e.g., the metropolitan concept, the regional governmental service concept, the special district concept) as a viable alternative for the replacement of ineffective and inefficient local and county government, where this is true, and as a viable alternative for the solution of areawide problems regardless of the capability of the existing units of government.

The entrenched units tend to perceive the regional educational service agency as either a first or another in a series of threats to the existing arrangements.

Major Administrative Issues

A large number of administrative issues are also inherent in the planning, establishment and operation of regional educational service agencies. One of the most perplexing of these is the frequently expressed concern that regional units, by making specialized programs and services available to small local school districts in both rural and suburban areas, in effect retard the reorganization of these districts into more viable operations by improving the quality of their programming and thus minimizing a substantial source of assumed justification for reorganization.

Another major concern is that the regional unit in effect creates still another layer of government between the local district and state government, thus hindering vertical communication between these two levels, compounding planning between the two levels, and adding to public confusion and understanding of the workings of government at both levels.

The method of financing RESA units also generates administratively oriented issues in addition to the previously cited politically oriented problems. The most perplexing of these have to do with the development of an equitable formula for the following aspects of regional unit operation: the determination of the true wealth of constituent local school districts; the determination of an assessment formula for the charging of service fees; the determination of an assessment formula for the charging of administrative

costs. Compounding these major concerns is the nature of voluntary vs. required participation and the presence or absence of state allocations to regional units for programming and administrative costs.

The particular relationship between the RESA unit and its constituent districts potentially can also generate a number of administratively oriented issues. Local school districts and the RESA can in many ways be in direct competition for the recruitment of specialized personnel and with regard to other aspects of the staffing act (e.g., salaries, fringe benefits, other compensatory and staff development benefits and activities). Potentially more significant is the issue of final determination of the administrative arrangements between the two units in the operation and scheduling of programs, and use of facilities and personnel.

Major Programming Issues

Another large number of issues are associated with the programming missions and operations of regional educational service agencies. A frequent concern in states where the RESA unit is statutorially or administratively charged with the performance of regulatory and ministerial functions for the state education agency is that potential conflict exists between the service posture and the enforcement posture of the unit. The dichotomy between these two roles can create a whole set of dysfunctions in the programming and other relationships between the two units.

Equally significant is the question of what programming responsibilities are to be undertaken by the RESA unit. Where arrangements for direct local school district input in program planning and operation is absent or weak, potential dysfunctions are highly probable, even in situations where program

participation is voluntary. Conversely, the heavy reliance on voluntary participation tends to place the regional unit in a somewhat weak long-range planning position.

A final major programming related issue centers around the question of direct vs. indirect services by the regional unit to its constituent local school district and to the students enrolled therein. The parameters of this important issue are not generally established by the legislative and/or administrative charge to regional educational service agencies.

Effective Strategies for Eliminating or Minimizing the Major Issues

Two general groupings of strategies will contribute substantially to the elimination or lessening of the major politically oriented, administratively oriented and programming oriented issues. These are: the establishment and systematic monitoring of a viable structural arrangement for the operation of regional educational service agencies, and a regular and meahingful public information program.

In the judgment of this writer, the previously identified recommended criteria for the establishment, governance, organization and operation of regional educational service agencies provide the essential elements to eliminate or vastly reduce a majority of the major issues surrounding the RESA concept in most state school systems and in most settings, either metropolitan or non-metropolitan, within a state. The following illustrations can be used in support of this relatively sweeping contention:

1. the recommendation that membership of the governing board reflect both director districts and the entire region

minimizes to a considerable degree the concern that the major population center of the RESA unit will automatically control the governing board;

2. the recommendation that the state education agency have authority to establish rules and regulations for the administration of RESA units contributes to the establishment of a meaningful external force available to local and state political and educational decision-makers to plan, monitor and intervene in a meaningful way, when necessary, in the operations of RESA units;
3. the frequent recommendations that the state education agency hold final approval over many of the operational aspects of the regional unit likewise reinforces the external monitoring capability of RESA units; and,
4. of most significance, the recommendation that a statutorially established general advisory board composed of one representative from each constituent district have statutorial authority to approve the RESA budget grants the member districts of the consortia a periodic, final and complete control over the unit, thus virtually eliminating a majority of the concerns that the RESA unit will unilaterally act without a clear mandate from the membership.

In summary, the recommended criteria in effect establishes a delicate check and balance system among the between the three principal parties in the arrangement. Dysfunctions in the arrangement can be quickly corrected.

Of most importance, the accountability of the three parties is well established and visible to all.

The second type of strategy useful in overcoming or minimizing many of the inherent issues associated with the RESA concept, the launching and maintenance of a meaningful public information program, is as critical here as in all public endeavors. Unlike other public activities, however, many of the recommended criteria for the establishment and operation of RESA units virtually insure that both vertical and horizontal communication is established and regularly maintained. This feature alone will contribute to a lessening of apprehension that the RESA is an arm of the state education agency and other similar politically oriented concerns. The prominance of the service nature of the RESA unit will emerge regularly in the frequent and consistent required vertical and horizontal communicative networks.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The regional educational service agency concept in its emerging form is a product of efforts by educational and political policy makers to correct existing and meet new needs in education and in society. The benefits of this alternative for the improvement of local school district programming and improvements in the operation of state school systems generally have been demonstrated in many parts of the nation.

The principal claims advanced for the use of this alternative can be summarized as follows:

1. regional units can contribute substantially to the protection of and promotion of local control and local determination in education;
2. regional units can contribute to the equalization and extension of educational opportunities for all children and youth;
3. regional units can significantly improve the quality of many educational programming efforts;
4. regional units can better insure the economical and efficient operation of many educational programming efforts;
5. regional units can serve as important resident change agents in education; and,
6. regional units can contribute significantly to improved coordination of local, regional and statewide planning and communication.

Exemplary regional educational service agencies in many states and in all types of settings, metropolitan and non-metropolitan alike, stand as evidence to observers of school government that these major claims can be readily documented.

1/ For an historical perspective of the development of the individual fifty state school systems, see: Education in the States: Historical Development and Outlook, Jim B. Pearson and Edgar Fulles (eds.), A Project of the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Education Association of the United States, Washington, D.C., 1969.

2/ For an historical perspective of the development of the middle echelon unit of school systems nationally, see: (a) Shirley Cooper and Charles O. Fitzwater, County School Administration, Haper and Row, New York, 1954; (b) National Commission on the Intermediate Unit, Effective Intermediate Units, A Guide for Development, Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, Washington, 1955; (c) William P. McClure, The Intermediate Administrative School District in the United States, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1956; (d) Alvin E. Rhodes (ed.), Better Education Through Effective Intermediate Units, Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, Washington, 1963; (e) Robert M. Isenberg (ed.), The Community School and the Intermediate Unit, Yearbook of the Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, Washington, 1954; (f) Charles O. Fitzwater, "Patterns and Trends in State School System Development," Journal On State School System Development, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1967, pp. 5-32; (g) E. Robert Stephens, et. al., The Multi-County Regional Educational Service Agency in Iowa, Part I: Final Report, Section One, "The Intermediate Unit of School Administration in the United States," Iowa Center for Research in School Administration, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1967; (h) Archie LeRoy McPherron, The Nature and Role of the Intermediate District in American Education (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1954); and, (i) Robert M. Isenberg, "State Organization for Service and Leadership to Local Schools," Education in the United States: Nationwide Developments Since 1900, Chapter 3, Edgar Fuller and Jim R. Pearson (eds.), A Project of the Council of Chief State School Officers, National Education Association of the United States, Washington, 1969, pp. 133-173.

3/ The focus of this paper was established in the charter to the author, Purchase Order No. OE1-0-73-2842, DHEW (Office of Education, Contracts and Grants Division, April 11, 1973, and supportive work statement.

4/ Goals for Public Education in Texas, A Report by the Subcommittee on Goals to the Govern's Committee on Public School Education, December 1968 (reproduced by OPERATION PEP, A State-Wide Project to Prepare Educational Planners for California under provisions of a Title III Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 grant to the San Mateo County Board of Education, California).

5/ Ibid., p. 1.

6/ Ibid., p. 3.

7/ Charles F. Faber, "The Size of a School District," The Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. XIVIII, No. 1, September 1966, pp. 33-35.

8/ Op. cit., p. 35.

9/ The Reorganization of Local School Districts, Know Your Schools Fact Sheet No. 9, National Committee for Support of the Public Schools, Washington, June 1967.

10/ Ibid.

11/ Stephens, E. Robert and John Spiess, "What Does Research Say about a Local School District," Journal of State School System Development, Vol. 1, No. 3, Fall 1967, pp. 182-199.

12/ Ibid., pp. 194-195.

13/ For a comprehensive profile of education in a rural setting, see especially: (a) Rural Education Today, Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, Washington, D.C., 1967; (b) The People Left Behind, A Report of the President's National Advisory Commission on Rural Poverty, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1967; (c) Rural Youth in Crisis: Facts, Myths, and Social Change, Lee G. Burchinal (ed.), Papers prepared for the National Conference on Problems of Rural Youth in a Changing Environment, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1964; (d) Hearing: Part 15--Education in Rural America, United States Congress, The Senate, Select Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity, 92nd Congress, First Session, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1972; and, (e) Planning for School District Organization: Selected Position Papers, Ralph D. Purdy (ed.), The Great Plains School District Organization Project, Lincoln, Nebraska, June 1968.

14/ For a comprehensive profile of education in an urban setting, see especially: D. P. Moynihan and Frederick Mosteller, On Equality of Educational Opportunity, Random House, New York, 1971; (b) James S. Coleman, Equality of Educational Opportunity, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1966; (c) James B. Conant, The American High School Today, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York, 1959; (d) Roe L. Johns and Kern Alexander (eds.), The National Education Project, Five Volumes, University of Florida Press, Gainesville, 1971; and, (e) Robert J. Havinghurst, Education in Metropolitan Areas, Allyn and Bacon, Inc., Boston, 1966.

15/ States judged to have engaged in a legitimate assessment of the concept in the time-frame emphasized in this paper and have not taken formal action are: South Dakota, North Dakota, Idaho, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Minnesota.

16/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) Senate Bill 538, Georgia Laws, 1972, p. 550; (b) "Cooperative Educational Service Agencies," unpublished policy statement (40-2900, 40-2910 and 40-2920)) of the State Board of Education, December 4, 1972; and, (c) "C.E.S.A. 1972-73," unpublished selected profile, State Department of Education, undated.

17/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) William R. Schroeder, "The Nebrasks Service Unit," Journal on State School System Development, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1967, pp. 56-66; and, (b) numerous descriptive brochures (unpublished) by many of the Educational Service Units. For an historical perspective on the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Nebraska, see: (a) Glenn Everett Turner, The Location and Administration of Intermediate School Districts for the State of Nebraska, (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1959); and, (b) Kenneth Leslie Foster, Educational Services Recommended for Adequate Intermediate Administrative Districts in Nebraska, (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1962).

18/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) Establishing the Intermediate Unit, Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1970; (b) Financing and Staffing the Intermediate Unit of School Administration in Pennsylvania, 1972-73, Center for Field Studies, Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania; and, (c) numerous descriptive brochures published by many of the Intermediate Units. For an historical perspective on the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Pennsylvania see: (a) Lloyd Wharton Showers, Changing Functions of the County Superintendency in Pennsylvania Schools (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, College Park, 1961; and, (b) Pennsylvania State Board of Education, An Intermediate Unit for Pennsylvania, State Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg, January 1967.

19/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) State Plan for the Establishment of Education Service Centers Including Regional Education Media Services, Texas Education Agency, July 1967; (b) The Texas Education Service Center: Promise of Opportunity, April 1969; (c) State Plan: Procedures and Policies for the Operation of Regional Education Service Centers, Revised, Texas Education Agency, January 1970; (d) Regional Education Service Center, Texas Education Agency, Summer 1972; and, (e) numerous descriptive brochures and manuals published by many of the Education Service Centers. For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Texas, see (a) Marlin L. Brochette, "The Regional Education Service Centers in Texas," Journal on State School Development, Vol. 1, No. 3, Fall 1967, pp. 163-172; (b) Paul V. Petty, The Intermediate School Administrative Unit: A Study of Its Applicability to Texas (unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas, Austin, 1950); and, (c) Texas Association of County Superintendents, The County Superintendency in Texas, The Association of County Superintendents, Austin, 1954.

20/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) The Intermediate School District in the State of Washington, State Department of Public Instruction, March 1967; and, (b) numerous descriptive brochures published by many of the Intermediate School Districts.

21/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) John R. Belton, "Wisconsin's New District Educational Service Agencies, Journal on State School System Development, Vol. 1, No. 4, Winter 1968; and (b) numerous descriptive brochures published by many of the Cooperative Educational Service Agencies. For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Wisconsin, see: (a) Russell T. Gregg and George E. Watson, The County Superintendency in Wisconsin, The School of Education, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1957; and (b) Howard William Heding, The Availability and Need of Educational Services in Wisconsin Public Schools in Relation to the Function of the Intermediate Unit of Educational Administration (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Maditon, 1957).

22/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) Operating Cooperative Programs, Colorado Department of Education, Denver, 1967; (b) Yellow Pages Plus, Colorado Department of Education, Denver, April, 1973; and, (c) Senate Bill No. 60, "Concerning Boards of Cooperative Services, and Making an Appropriation for the Financing Thereof," enacted 1973. For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Colorado, see: Dale Herman Mills, A Study To Determine the Extent of Need for Services and Leadership of the Intermediate Unit in Colorado (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Colorado State College, Greeley, 1965).

23/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) House File 553, Code of Iowa, Chapter 273, 1965; (b) "A Position Paper: Area Education Service Agencies for Iowa," submitted by the Cabinet, Iowa Department of Public Instruction to the State Board of Public Instruction, 468A-614F and 468A-622 Rev., Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, April 11, 1968; (c) "Joint County Agreements and Joint County Systems," 2100-B37596-8173, Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, August 1973; and, (d) numerous descriptive brochures published by many of the Joint County School Systems. For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Iowa see: (a) The Iowa Research Committee on the Intermediate Unit, Effective Intermediate Units in Iowa, State of Iowa, Des Moines, 1960; (b) The Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, Education Beyond High School Age: The Community College, State of Iowa, Des Moines, 1962; and, E. Robert Stephens, et. al., The Multi-County Regional Educational Service Agency in Iowa, Part I: Final Report, Section Two, Iowa Center for Research in School Administration, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1967.

24/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) William J. Emerson, "Intermediate School District," Journal on State School System Development, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 1967, pp. 33-45; (b) "Reorganization of Intermediate School Districts in Michigan," A Position Paper, Michigan Department of Education, Lansing, June 29, 1971; and, (c) numerous descriptive brochures published by many of the Intermediate Units. For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Michigan, see: Colon Lee Scharbly, A Study of Selected Functions of the County School Office in Michigan (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, East Lansing, 1956); and, (b) Harlan Dennett Beem, A Study of the Intermediate Unit of School Administration in Michigan (unpublished dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1957).

25/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) Frederick J. DeLaFleur, Shared Services Boards, New York State School Boards Association, Inc., Albany, March 1961; (b) Ewald B. Nyquist, "How BOCES Serves the Metropolitan School Systems Concept in New York State," Phi Delta Kappan, September 1973, pp. 26-28, 81; (c) miscellaneous unpublished materials of the New York State Education Department, Spring and Summer 1973; and, (d) numerous descriptive brochures published by many many of the BOCES's. For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in New York, see: (a) Milton Flyn Royden, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services in the State of New York (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1956; (b) Julian E. Butterworth and Edmund H. Crane, A New Intermediate School District for New York State. State Education Department, Albany, 1956); and, (c) Norman Haweele, An Inquiry into the Function and Administration of Boards of Cooperative Services in the State of New York with Proposals for Their Improvement (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1964).

26/ The following sources were utilized in the development of the state profile: (a) Senate Bill No. 183; (b) "Resolution of Establishment for Regional Educational Service Agencies," West Virginia Department of Education, July 1972; and, (c) publications, including descriptive brochures and manuals, of several of the Regional Educational Service Agencies.

27/ For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in California, see: (a) Jack Hamilton Hassinger, Criteria for Determining an Adequate Intermediate Educational Unit in California (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1958); (b) David Augustus Wiley, A Comparative Study of Perceptions of and Expectations for the Role of the County Superintendent In California (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Stanford University, Palo Alto, 1963); (c) Glenn W. Hoffman, The Flexible Intermediate Unit in California: A Study of Regional Educational Activities Performed Cooperatively by County Offices of Education, June 1966; and, Boards of Education Section of California School Boards Association, "The Committee of Ten," The Future Role and Function, Size, Structure, and Organization of the Intermediate Unit in California, September 1966. For an historical perspective of the

regional educational service agency concept in Illinois, see: (a) Norman Eugene McClintock, Development of Criteria for an Intermediate School District an Their Application in Illinois (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, 1957); and, (b) Robert Andrew Pringle, A Proposal for a New Intermediate Administrative Structure for Education in Illinois (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1964). For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Ohio, see: (a) John Shaw Rinehart, The Function, Organization, and Operation of the County School District in Ohio (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, Columbus, 1957).; and, (b) A Report of the Project Staff, A Master Plan for School District Organization in Ohio, The State Department of Education, Columbus, December 1966. For an historical perspective of the development of the regional educational service agency concept in Oregon, see: (a) Walter Oliver Shold, Alternative Possible Patterns of Development for the Office of the County Superintendent in Oregon (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Washington State University, Pullman, 1961); and, (b) Robert Clarence Sabin, A Survey of the Need for an Intermediate School District in Oregon with Implications for its Future Development (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, Eugene, 1965).

28/ For an overview of multi-and single purpose educational cooperatives, see: (a) The Educational Cooperative: Rationale, Administration, and Implementation, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., Charleston, West Virginia, 1969; (b) Descriptive Design for the Educational Cooperative, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Inc., Charleston, West Virginia, 1971; (c) Shared Services and Cooperatives: Schools Combine Resources to Improve Education, National School Public Relations Association, Washington, D.C., 1971; (d) Interpretative Study of Research and Development Relative to Educational Cooperatives, Project Staff, College of Education, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, January 15, 1971; and, (e) Rural Shared Services, Project Report, Parts One, Two, and Three, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon, April 1969.

29/ See Appendix A for selected enrollment criterion recommended by state study commissions and national study commissions.

30/ See E. Robert Stephens, An Exploratory Investigation of Existing Cooperative Programs and Activities Between Selected Central City and Other Metropolitan Area School Districts, Special Report Number 66, The Iowa Center for Research in School Administration, The University of Iowa, February 1966.

31/ It is to be recognized that the classification system utilized does not, in all cases, reflect the interdependency of many of the guidelines which have been arbitrarily placed, for purposes of this paper, into one of the categories utilized. Caution should be exercised to carefully review individual guidelines within the context of the entire listing.

32/ This statement of recommended criteria is an adaptation of the following three previous publications by the writer on this subject: (a) "A Profile of Exemplary Regional Educational Service Agencies," Planning and Changing, Vol. Three, No. Three, Fall 1972, pp. 33-40; (b) Recommended Statutory Provisions for the Establishment, Governance, Organization, and Operation of Regional Educational Service Agencies, National Education Association, Rural Education Association, Washington, D.C., October 1970, 9 pp.; and, (c) "Rural Education: Regional Approach to Programs," The Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. 7, The MacMillan Co. and the Free Press, pp. 583-589.

33/ (a) A generally accepted minimal numerical criterion appropriate for most state school systems is 30,000 to 50,000 students (see Appendix A, Selected Statutorial and Recommended Enrollment Size Criteria); (b) a generally accepted standard for many of the states where the local peoperty tax provides the majority of financial support for local school district operation is that a RESA unit have an assessed valuation of taxable property of approximately three hundred million dollars; (c) a generally accepted standard appropriation for many state school systems which gives recognition to the important considerations of accessibility, vertical and horizontal communication and sensitivity to the specific needs of the constituency of the regional unit is that the service center or centers be located within a one-hour driving time of 90 percent of the local school districts served.

34/ At the time of this writing, this arrangement appears to be consistent with the recent constitutional challenges centering on the selection process for governing boards of public corporations emanating from a reassessment of the one man-one vote concept.

35/ Several attitudinal case studies on cooperation in education have been completed in recent years; see especially: (a) Robert W. Heller, John W. Kohl and Charles S. Lusthaus, "Attitudes Toward Regional Cooperation in Education," Planning and Changing, Fall 1972, Vol. Three, No. Three, pp. 42-53; and, (b) Basil G. Zimmer and Ames H. Hawley, Metropolitan Schools: Resistance to District Reorganization, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, California, 1968.

APPENDICES

A. GENERAL CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

B. INVENTORY OF ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

APPENDIX A

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

In 1967, a study commissioned in Iowa reviewed over one hundred statements of general criteria for the establishment of regional educational service agencies.[a/] Emphasized in the review were legislatively established criteria, reports of state study commissions in a large number of states, reports of national study commissions, doctoral dissertations and recommendations of writers in the field of educational administration.

The study grouped the dominant criteria into four categories. These were:

1. criteria related to the student population base of the regional unit;
2. criteria related to the number of local school districts to be served by the regional unit;
3. criteria related to the size of the regional service base or recommended travel time/distance from the regional unit to the constituent local districts; and,
4. criteria related to the financial base of the unit.

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a/ E. Robert Stephens, et. al., "Criteria for Effective Intermediate Units," The Multi-County Regional Educational Service Agency in Iowa. The Iowa Center for Research in School Administration, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, September 1967, pp. 112-122.

With regard to the enrollment size criterion, it was established that recommended minimal student enrollment bases tended to increase from approximately 5,000 to 10,000 students, the dominant enrollment size recommended offered in the 1950's, to approximately double this figure in the recommendations cited in the early and mid-1960's. This trend is supported by the enrollment size recommendations shown in the following table which were developed in the mid-1960's. A majority of the recommended actions concerning enrollment size offered since the mid-1960's tend to be even larger, particularly for units located in metropolitan areas.

Prior to the mid-1960's, many recommendations dealt with the number of local school districts to be served by the regional unit. The earlier studies which offered standards in this regard tended to specify approximately ten constituent districts as the desirable number. Since the mid-1960's, the use of the number of local units to be served criterion has virtually disappeared.

The third dominant standard throughout the 1950's, 1960's and early 1970's relates to a recommended travel time from the service unit to the constituent district. Most frequently, this criterion is stated as a one-hour travel time, or 50 mile radius to be served by the regional unit.[b/] Another common expression of this standard is the use of the "natural" socio-economic community.

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b/ For a brief overview of the "time-distance" concept see, Hugh Denny, "The Emerging Patterns of Service for Communities," Proceedings of the Fifth Urban Policy Conference, The Institute for Public Affairs, the University of Iowa, Iowa City, October 4, 1968.

TABLE A

SELECTED STATUTORIAL AND/OR RECOMMENDED ENROLLMENT SIZE OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

State	Year	Enrollment Size K-12, Inclusive	Source
Group A: Statutorial Recommendations			
Michigan	1962	5,000 minimum	
Texas	1965	50,000 minimum	
Washington	1969	20,000 minimum	
Wisconsin	1965	25,000 minimum	
Colorado	1973	4,000 minimum	
Group B: Recommendations of State Study Committees and/or Reports			
Iowa	1967	30,000 minimum	Stephens, et. al.[a/]
Ohio	1966	35,000 minimum (rural) to 75,000 minimum (urban)	Project Staff[b/]
Nebraska	1965	10,000 minimum	Inman[c/]
Pennsylvania	1970	100,000 minimum	State Department of Education
Michigan	1967	100,000 minimum and maximum for metro areas	Emerson[d/]
New York	1973	40,000 minimum	State Education Department[e/]
Illinois	1966	100,000 minimum in metro area	State Task Force on Education[f/]

TABLE A (Cont.)

State	Year	Enrollment Size K-12, Inclusive	Source
Group C: Recommendations of National Study Committee and/or Reports/ All States	1967	50,000 minimum	National Education Association, Department of Rural Education[g]

a/ Stephens, E. Robert, et. al., The Multi-County Regional Educational Service Agency in Iowa. The Iowa Center for Research in School Administration, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, September, 1967.

b/ A Master Plan for School District Reorganization in Ohio. The State Department of Education, Columbus, 1966, p. 123.

c/ Inman, William E., "Size and District Organization," Planning for School District Organization, Selected Position Papers. The Great Plains School District Organizational Project, Lincoln. Nebraska, June, 1968, p. 174.

d/ Emerson, William J., "Intermediate School District," Journal on State School Systems Development, Volume 1, Number 1, Spring, 1967, p. 43.

e/ "BOCES-Current Status," The State Education Department, The University of the State of New York, unpublished, March, 1973.

f/ The Task Force on Education, Education for the Future of Illinois. State of Illinois, Springfield, 1966, p. 150.

g/ Regional Educational Service Agency Prototypes. Optimal Statutory Arrangements, and Suggestions for Implementation. National Education Association. Department of Rural Education, Washington, D.C., January, 1967, p. 76.

The fourth dominant criterion, that of the financial base of the unit, has also been regularly cited in the literature over the past approximately two decades. Most typically cited is the need for sufficient economic resources to support the program of the regional unit, and a parallel need that the resources of the unit be reliable and definite.

While the movement appears to be still in the developmental stage and even at best is not widespread, it would appear that a discernable fifth criterion for the establishment of regional units is gaining popularity. This is the requirement that the regional unit adhere to the geographic boundaries of sub-state governmental areas and/or regional economic planning areas being established in a majority of the states.

APPENDIX B

INVENTORY OF ILLUSTRATIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OFFERED BY REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES

Listed below are illustrations of programs and services offered by operating regional educational service agencies in the nation.

GROUP ONE: ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

1. Apportionment of state funds to local school districts
2. Accounting functions for local school districts (e.g., receipts, expenditures and encumbrances)
3. Auditing of local school district accounts
4. Preparation of local school district payrolls and issuance of salary warrants
5. Approval of local school district boundary changes
6. Assistance in preparation of and/or approval of local school district building programs (e.g., long-range plans, site acquisition, selection of architect. development of educational specifications, legal advice, building appraisal)
7. Completion of local school district census
8. Interpretation of federal and state legislation, and state education rules and regulations
9. Assistance in preparation of and/or approval of local school district reorganization plans
10. Assistance in school bus inspections
11. Assistance in and/or approval of bus transportation routes
12. Assistance in school lunch program planning
13. Provision of liaison functions with other governmental subdivisions
14. Provision of liaison functions with other local and regional private and quasi-private agencies
15. Administration of cooperative purchasing programs
16. Assistance to local school districts in the development of specifications for furniture and equipment
17. Provision of local school district staff certification services
18. Maintenance of teacher substitute pool
19. Provision of teacher recruitment activities
20. Coordination of joint employment of professional and support service personnel

21. Provision of consultative and advisory services (e.g., legal, federal programs, business management, policy development, salary schedule construction, public relations, publications, administrative organization, staff relations)
22. Assistance to governing boards of local school districts in the recruitment and selection of chief administrative officials
23. Provision of pupil accounting data processing services (e.g., scheduling, attendance reporting, grade reporting, test scoring)
24. Provision of administrative and financial accounting data processing services (e.g., payroll accounting, transportation scheduling, certification, statistical reporting requirements for state and local governments).

GROUP TWO: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

1. Provision of general curricula consultant services
2. Provision of specialized curricula consultant services in all fields
3. Provision of educational media services (e.g., film library, closed-circuit television, educational broadcasting, professional library, production center for the development of slides, charts, maps, study prints, models, fine art prints, printing services, tape and record library, specialized reference textbooks and materials, audio-visual repair and loan services, in-service programs for media specialists, teachers and administrators)
4. Assistance in the provision of outdoor education programs
5. Provision of remedial instructional programs and services
6. Provision of standardized intelligence, achievement and diagnostic testing programs, test scoring services, and consultant services
7. Provision of educational programs for institutionalized children
8. Planning assistance to other local agencies in the provision of educational programs for institutionalized children
9. Provision of consultant services for elementary-secondary student personnel programs (e.g., guidance programs, supportive counseling services, in-service programs for counselors, teachers and administrators, designing and conducting drop-out and follow-up studies, career day and other orientation programs)

GROUP THREE: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

1. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for the educable mentally retarded
2. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for the trainable mentally retarded
3. Assistance in and/or provision of work-study programs for mentally handicapped
4. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for the emotionally disturbed
5. Provision of psychological and psychiatric services
6. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for the physically handicapped and for children with special health problems
7. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for exceptional children of pre-school age
8. Assistance in and/or provision of instructional programs for homebound children
9. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for the gifted
10. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for the partially-signted and blind
11. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for the hard-of-hearing and deaf
12. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for the speech handicapped
13. Assistance in and/or provision of school social work services
14. Assistance in and/or provision of programs for children with specific learning disabilities

GROUP FOUR: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

1. Assistance in and/or provision of administrative and business management research and development studies (e.g., administrative organization, budget analysis, cost studies, long-range financial planning, food service program, transportation program, maintenance and custodial program, long-range physical facility planning, enrollment trends and projections, staffing ratios)
2. Assistance in and/or provision of staff personnel research and development studies (e.g., salary schedules, teacher load, teacher turnover, professional negotiations)

3. Assistance in and/or provision of curriculum and instructional research and development studies (e.g., needs assessment, development of objectives, class size, pupil-teacher ratio, time allotments, teacher-made tests, grade reporting practices, pilot projects, evaluation of instructional practices, evaluation of instructional materials)
4. Provision of reviews of the literature and critiques of research and development studies on contemporary educational issues

GROUP FIVE: STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

1. Assistance in and/or provision of staff development programs for instructional personnel of local school districts
2. Assistance in and/or provision of staff development for non-instructional personnel of local school districts (e.g., bus drivers, cafeteria employees, secretarial personnel, custodial personnel)
3. Assistance in and/or provision of staff development programs for administrative personnel of local school districts
4. Assistance in and/or provision of in-service programs for members and officials of governing boards of local school districts